



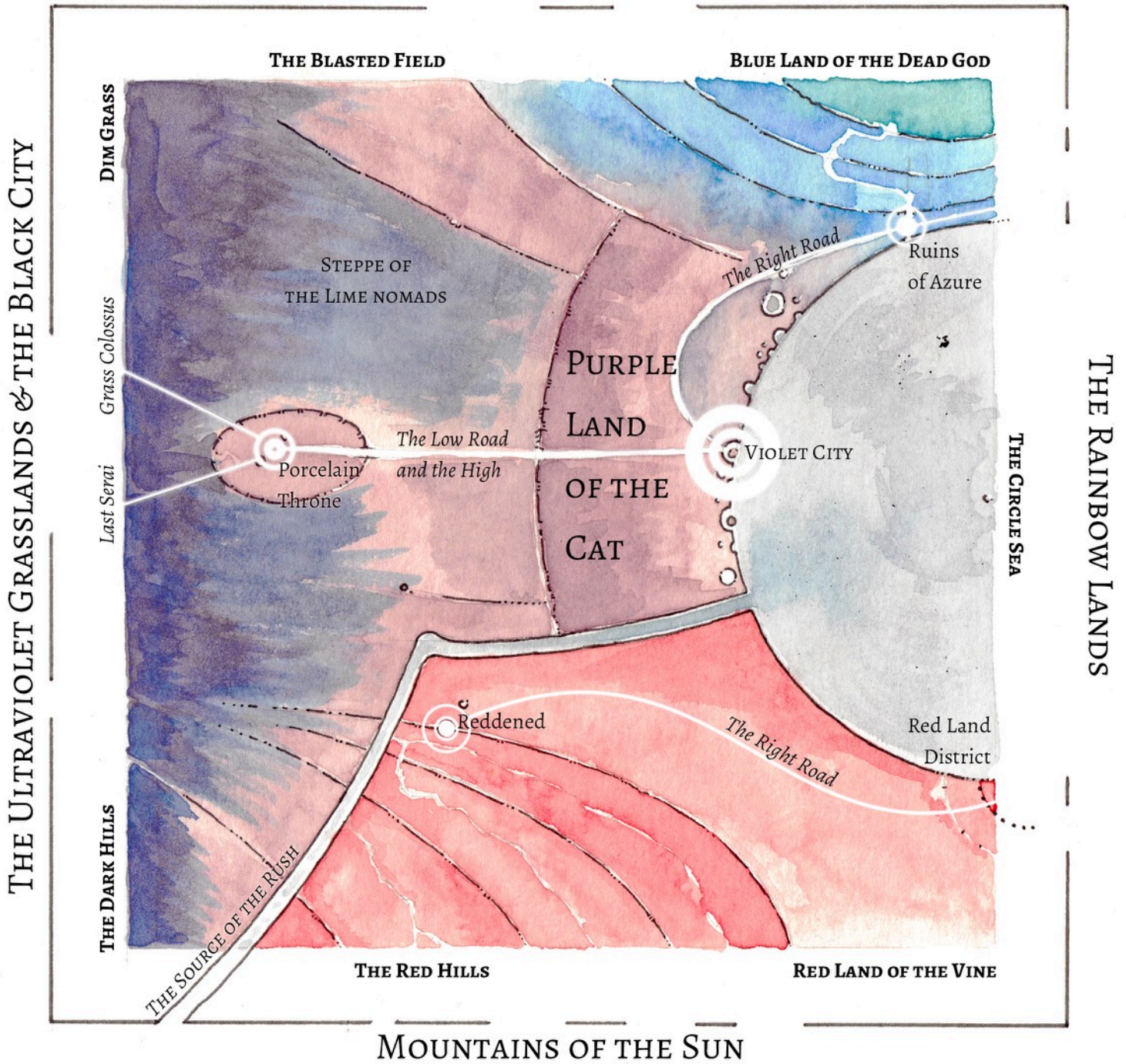
THE ULTRAVIOLET GRASSLAND & THE BLACK CITY 5/X

a psychedelic, heavy metal rpg sandbox
for a group of blundering PCs visiting the depths of the Ultraviolet Grassland
in search of wealth and booty to pay back their adventuring loans.
For the OSR, the New Edition, & other rpgs

by

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MOUNTAINS OF THE MOON



The Left End of the Right Road

Who were those odd folks and gods that built the world? Who carved the Source and broke the hills? How did the Blue God die? What is at the heart of the Circle Sea? What blasted that blasted field?

Good citizens do not ask and Father-Mother of the Hammer and Cross does not tell.

The past sleeps in the Forgetting for good reason. But do the cats know or care? No, the violets are shameless. Corrupted by the Black City. Forbidding the Kinder Inquisition, digging into the Old Accounts. They hate the joy-liberty of Metropolis.

—*The Green Tourist: Lesser Lands of the Rainbow, vol.2*

1. Violet City: a last eerie house

This is the end of the Right Road. Humanity's dominions wind down in the purple haze that wreathes the sunrises of this western reach. No roads, but caravans brave the Ultraviolet Grassland into the eternal sunset of the Black City. Porcelain Princes and Spectrum Satraps oversee great herds of biomechanical burdenbeasts that bring the odd fruits, the black light lotus, the indigo ivories, the rainbow silks, and the sanguine porcelains so popular among the meritocrats of the Rainbow Lands. Many voyagers are taken by the vomes, but nobody likes to talk of those lost to the ultras.

Weather: The sun rises through a violet haze, slowly, reluctant to give up the shimmering phantoms of predawn to the dusty day.

Misfortune: It's been a long, hard, stupid journey and everyone should get into the mood with a friendly Charisma check to see how unlucky they are (DC 8+1d6). Unlucky voyagers who fail roll d6:

1. got the runny blues, a depressive digestive disorder,
2. picked up tendrill tapeworms,
3. got an infected sore on the muddy road,
4. were pick-pocketed,
5. fell in love with a swamp wisp,
6. simply ruined their nice shoes in a deceptive bog.

DIRECTIONS

Local, Townships of the Violet City (safe city): administered by the Catlords of the Violet Citadel for the good of the no-good travellers visiting their palace of knowledge, learning and sanctimony. (p.XX)

West, the Low Road and the High (trail, 1 week): both roads are rutted jokes. Both lead to Porcelain Throne, the neutral hole at the edge of Viomech 5 territory. (p.XX)

West, Steppe of the Lime Nomads (steppe, *d4 weeks): flocks of cat-eared sheep and the odd transplanted limey nomad clan makes this area of the UV Grassland relatively civil. There are no trails and the journey is slow. (p.XX)

East, The Right Road (road, *d6 weeks): back to the Rainbowlands. A place for heroes to retire, beyond the bounds of the UV Grassland. (END)



Townships of the Violet City, halls of the graceful cats

“*Soyez tranqui!*,” murmurs the dead-eyed lady in P.T.’s mind. Horned cats creep from hazy alleys and examine their baggage. The citadel looms, eerie and obnoxious, beyond the haze layer. A black cat nods, the lady steps aside. The townships beckon and the party strides into the stall-strewn streets.

Expenses: 5 cash per week for tramps, 50 cash per week to earn a modicum of respect.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE STREETS (D6)

1. Green-blood shock-peddler **Mencia** pays for tales and pictures of the “Wonders of the West” (double for well-written, illustrated accounts).
2. **Woger de R.F.D.**, a reputable moustachioed free-merchant, is sending a free caravan of vampire wines and livingstone bricks to the Last Serai to trade directly with the Spectrum Satraps. He’s hiring caravan guards (40 cash per guard on safe arrival).
3. **Natega the Kind** sells original ointments, shoddy shoes and downright dangerous gear at reasonable prices, but her Red Cat meows *Charm Person* at travelers (her supplies may give a disadvantage on checks, but she won’t admit it).
4. A **scared urchin** runs into the street, shouting “a cat tried to worm into my mouth!” She will integrate into society and become a cat pet soon. Her name is **Uda**, for now.
5. A **sunburned man** with pink hair staggers out of an inn, cruelly stabbed, sprays crimson bubbles and groans “a behemoth’s pearl for dear Cubina.” He clutches a map to Behemoth’s Shell far to the west (advantage on encounter checks, *d6). If healed, his name is **Vorgo** and makes a shifty, cowardly, but loyally incompetent henchman. Who stabbed him? It was dark, he was drunk. (p.XX)
6. In Charming Square carriages cram into a meowing mob as confiscated traveler dogs are thrown into **pit fights** against trained sewer rats. Bookies take bets of up to 10 cash per bout (check Charisma to win). Saving a lucky dog costs 1d6 x 50 cash. Cheering the dogs draws glares from cat people.

Carousing: fun for all ages. (p.XX)

Drugs: for heroes to give up more effectively. (p.XX)

Eateries: the last fine dining before the steppe. (p.XX)

Supplies: and other nonsense. (p.XX)

CATS, CATS, CATS

Cats are the priests of the Purple God(dess). The high magi of the University of the Citadel are changeling cat-people. They eat traveler babes. There are hidden horned rat masters who secretly dominate the cats. The cats have little, manipulative human hands. All this may be lies spread by doghead insurrectionists.

Horned Cats silently monitor the townships around the Violet Citadel and all the townsfolk treat them with great kindness and respect.

AC 13, HP 2 (1d4), +1 claws 1,

Powers: *Feline Telepathy*, *Ventriloquism*,

Spells: *Entrhall Human*.

Black Cats are the silver-tongued mistresses of the townships, with serpents in their tails.

AC 13, HP 2 (1d4), +5 serpent bite 1, narcotic DC 10.

Spells and abilities as horned cat.

Bad Cats are half-glass, walk through corners and curse with a purr. So they say.



Carousing viole[n]tly

“*Voi, pâle-couleur, pren an-tour!*” shouts the tout in pasty Purple patois. Others chime in, mottled capes flutter, papier panels advertise “*the last partie before lanotte.*” Lips smack. The plebe churls crowd in to sell good time, forgetting or just a steppe-style rat sausage surprise.

HOW TO CAROUSE

Carousing was first invented by Jeff Rients (<http://jrients.blogspot.com/>) and lets the DM easily and simply separate heroes from their treasure. The system I use is similar to Jeff's:

- (1) Hero blows 1d6 x 100 cash on a week of hard partying and gains that amount of xp.
- (2) Rolling more cash/xp than the hero has available means a nasty debt to a local cad.
- (3) In any case, the hero makes a Charisma save. On a fail, they roll on the Fun Fun Table.

Bonus: a critical success on the Charisma save lets the hero carouse harder and party away another 1d8 x 100 cash. A critical fail means an extra roll on the table.

D12 VIOLET CITY CAROUSING MISHAPS

1. kicked out of town as a dirty dog. No XP and a reputation. Also, case of canine cooties or lycanthropy.
2. the odd fruits were odder than usual this time. Roll d6: an extra (1) ear, (2) nose, (3) wrinkle, (4) pearl, (5) tentacle, (6) cat grows.
3. now addicted to cat snip. You're welcome. A weekly supply costs 50 cash. No cat snip = halved Charisma. Cure takes 1d6 weeks and 100 cash per week.
4. that cheap black light lotus? You now phosphoresce in ultraviolet light. UV creatures hit with advantage.
5. ingested a magic cat spirit and became a cat pet. Your hero becomes a henchman/familiar of your new character: a horned cat named **Twinklestar**.
6. got into a staring match with an eyebiter. Lost an eye.
7. found the anthropic fighting pits. Lost half hit points. Succeed in a Str save to win 1d4 x 100 cash.
8. acquired bananas. A whole cart of bananas and a surprisingly intelligent ape named Ananas.
9. mind blown. Permanently gain 1 Wis and (roll d6) a case of (1) the shakes, (2) demonic possession, (3) split personality, (4) fine wine, (5) corruption, (6) brain worm.
10. the bloody flux. Hero now requires double supplies, especially toilet paper. Con save to recover at the end of every week.

11. dreams of porcelain-faced shadows, a fear of the dark, a missing tooth and a straw doll of yourself. Int save to avoid a paralyzing fear during the next battle
12. wake with a bag of strangled cats drained of blood, a hundred ominous pieces of silver (100 cash) and a sense of foreboding. Hours later (roll d6) an (1) inn, (2) cat house, (3) opera shack, (4) general store, (5) political café, (6) mansion collapses in a whisper of necrotic decay.

Cad: Herrie Tree, necroambulist and procurer of fine work-corpse for the CAT construction company. Loan shark to the corpse-to-be. Fancy a body-snatching gig?

Twinklestar is an ambitious sixteen year old cat seeking the *Rat Rod of Immor[t]ality*. Roll stats with an extra d6 for Dex and Int and a d6 less for Str and Con. Advance as wizard.

AC 13 (base), HD 1d4, +2 claws 1, keen smell.

Powers: *Feline Telepathy, Ventriloquism, Purr of Power.*

Spells: *Enthrall Human, Hold Portal.*

Weaknesses: dogs, balls of yarn, thunder



Drugs in a purple haze

P.T. stumbled into a small shrine garden and vomited copiously over the frog altar. Luminous animalcules burst into song and dance. He stared. Satisfied spirits or hallucination, he could not tell.

D8 FUN-TIME VIOLET CITY DRUGS

1. **Black light lotus** glows in the dark and cats love it. Eaten, it cures mental afflictions for a week. Smoked, it brings deep sleep and restores 1d6 hit or ability points. Smear on the skin, it exudes fragrant mind-altering pheromones, boosting Cha by 1d4 for *d4 days. *d4 doses (50 cash).
2. **Cat snip** is a powdered puff mushroom. It brings euphoria and *d4 bonus actions. *d4 doses (50 cash). *Addictive* (DC 2d6). Run out: halved Charisma.
3. **Ultra jay** are the crystal needles of a fabulous UV bird. Inserted, they give advantage on social skills and reduce Dexterity by d4 for a week. *d4 doses (250 cash).
4. **Cat coffee** is a narcotic made from black cat droppings. A pot induces sleep and restores 1d4 mental ability points. *d4 doses (20 cash).
5. **Whiskers** expand the mind and give advantage to perception and intuition, a weak levitation effect and disadvantage on physical activity. *d4 doses (100 cash). *Addictive* (DC 2d6). Run out: halved Dexterity.
6. **Felix whizz** is a popular energy drink the catipede peddle. A cup grants 1d4 temporary hp and disadvantage on social checks. *d4 doses (10 cash). *Weakly addictive* (DC 1d6). Run out: pissy, disadvantage on Cha and Int checks.
7. **Purple haze** is the toke of choice for manly men. The aromatized “*essensa de mors*” numbs pain and emotions. A long spliff gives advantage on saves against pain, grief, fear and hurt, and disadvantage to Dexterity and Wisdom checks. *d6 doses (40 cash). *Weakly addictive* (DC 1d6). Run out: cotton mouth, lose 1d6 Int and Wis.
8. **Dog's tail** is a chew root that is used to boost concentration, giving advantage on cognitive tasks. *d4 doses (75 cash).

TRIPPING

Drugs are an **experience**. Heroes gain (1d6 + Wis mod) x 10 XP when they try a new one.

Tracking durations is annoying. Assume effects last a few hours, so while crawling give Heroes a *d6 to roll after every encounter. When it runs out, the effect wears off.

BUT DRUGS ARE BAD, M'KAY

Every time a hero takes an addictive drug they roll a Constitution save (DC 3 + 1d10). If they fail, they're hooked. The player takes a pen and writes the addiction and a drug supply tracker on the hero's character sheet.

From then on, the hero rolls a drug supply die once a week to stay functional.

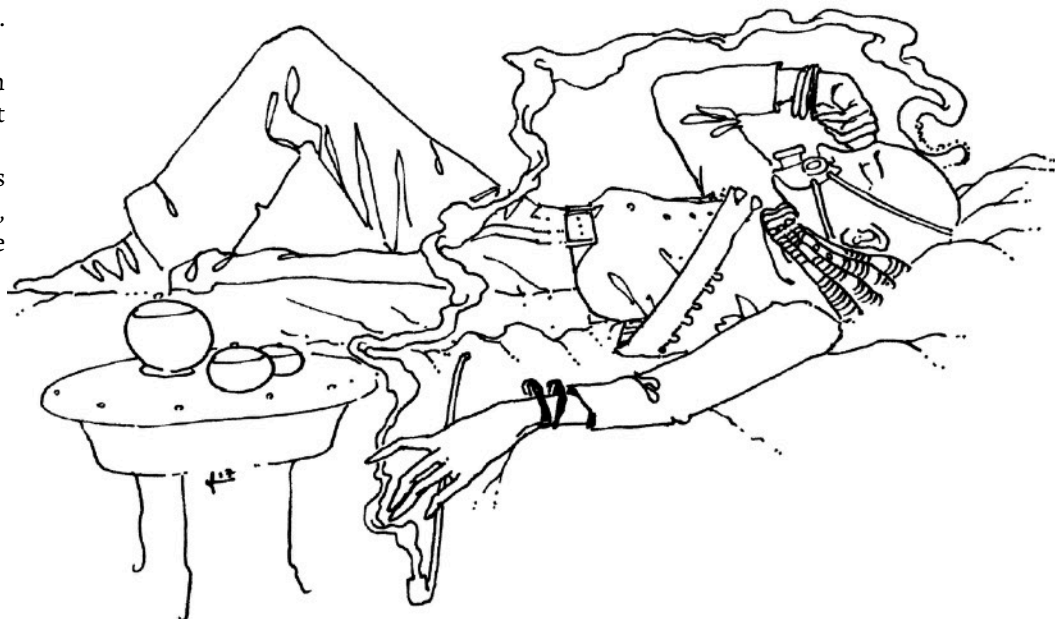
Additionally, the hero rolls a drug supply die every time they want (need) a hit.

If the hero **runs out**, the hero suffers until they get a nice strong hit.

Curing addiction takes a long time. Role-play the struggle or use *Cure Disease*. There are no rules beyond that. It's hard, figure it out.

Though cured, the hero has sipped at the teat of transcendence and a fresh taste of the Milk of M'le Maiku (or whatever it was they were hooked on) restarts the addiction.

Long-term effects tend to be harsh and lethal, but so are monsters. Ignore the long-term. Heroes die.



The last gastronomer: the eating experience

D.W. and Poncho sat on the bench-gargoyle munching their sandwiches. The lithic ornamental sighed and hoovered crumbs. It was going to be another one of those days.

A SOCIAL EXPERIENCE

Like with drugs, fine (or odd) dining is also an experience for heroes. However, it's usually less hazardous, if more time-consuming. It takes a week for a hero to become a regular. The cost is in addition to living expenses. Sometimes there is an additional requirement.

D6 TOWNSHIP DINERS

1. **Pér Slaji:** the grimmest dining experience in the township. Poison saves (DC 1d8) are *de rigueur*, advantage finding cads, cutpads and pursenapes. Regular: 1 cash per week, poisoned by Pér, 50 XP.
2. **Shéh Shah:** premium water-pipe and cat café, hub of a feline franchise stretching from the RLD to the Porcelain Throne. Cool cats get good drugs here, dopey dogs not welcome. Regular: 10 cash. Get a gig with the purple hazer body snatchers, 50 XP.
3. **Le Pesquemanceur:** Seka the summoner is the sharpest shark slicer south of Azure. Won't find a better source of black market fishing scrolls and amulets. Regular: 20 cash, Learn *Attract Fish*, *Early Worm*, *Net Trick* or *Seka's Spear of Slicing*, 100 XP.
4. **Le ultim Gastrognôme:** the peak of piquant cuisine, catering to black cats and their cat pets, foreign emissaries, princes and satraps of the caravan kingdoms. Getting in is hard, but prestigious (advantage interacting with the local nobbs and snobs). Regular: 200 cash, anointed by the gastro-gnome, 100 XP.
5. **Al flogon:** drinking dive of the abnegators of the Rainbow Pantheon. Only visitors with less than 10 Charisma can enter without a Blasphemy save (Wisdom save DC 8+1d6). Intelligent visitors can learn about the biomechanicum here. Regular: 5 cash, biomechanicum, 200 XP.
6. **Nul sanctimons:** a holy water and cat whizz bar, where the *rafiné* meet, take cat coffee and comment on the empresses' wonderful new clothes. "Sé très il-decadént, néy?" says the low-cut eunuch. It's not. The food nourishes the soul, but not the body. Regulars regain half hp and a bonus spell slot. Regular: 100 cash, fashionable but ineffective new habit, 100 XP.

LAST CHAIR SALON

Last place to stock up on yellow beer, felix whizz and cat coffee before the low road and the high split on their two ways to the Porcelain throne. Only double price for everything, great deal!

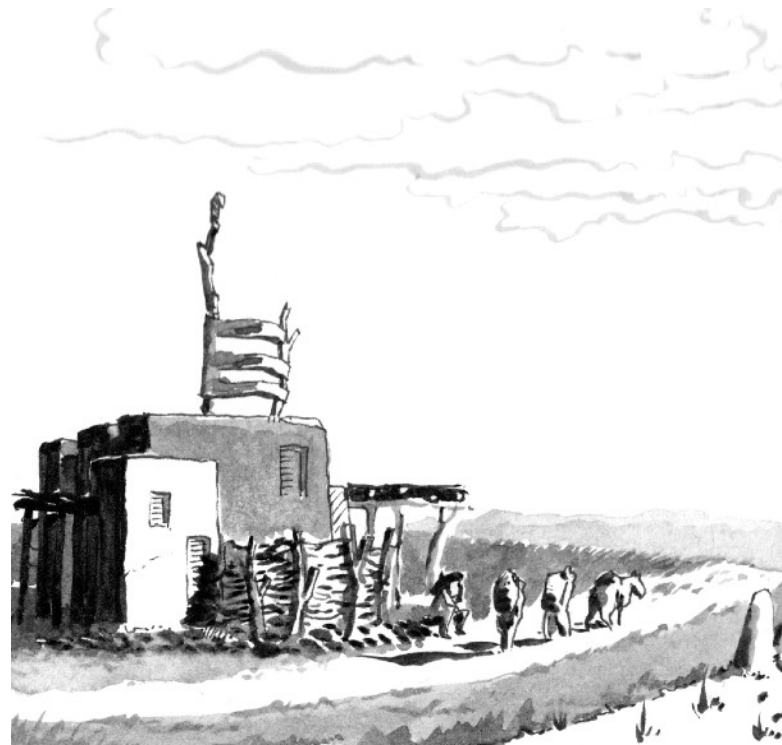
Owner: Marsa Vinoble, hates blues.

Nemesis: the local *pastorales* hate the tough business-heroine selling Violet drugs to their children as is her free market right.

Secret: a vome nest-mother is chained in the cellar, hooked up to a fermentation golem.

Regular: 100 cash and a Felix Whizz addiction, 80 XP.

Blasphemers automatically fail their next *d8 Charisma saves. A silly and expensive penance removes the divine sanction.



Supplies and survival

D.W. was inscrutable. Poncho looked peeved.

“We’re going to the Black City and we don’t care if it’s supposed to take eight weeks, we’ll make it in four and bring enough black-light to set us all up. Now, how many horses will you loan us?”

Inge and Ingot, the bearded ambiguously dwarfish merchants glowered and pointed to the large sign that read, “No Lones to Adventurers, Frybooters or Wagonbonds.”

The Violet Citadel is the last place to buy supplies and animals for the long crossing. Every salty old hand advises at least four beasts per traveler. Spicier hands wink and suggest it’s possible with just the two.

SURVIVING THE UV GRASSLANDS

The Black City is really far away. So far, that every steppe in the point crawl takes a week. This requires some new rules, I made a whole damn appendix for them, but here’s a summary.

Tracking supplies the classic way is time consuming, thus: **usage dice**. Usage dice are a polyhedral dice chain and drop to the next lowest on every 1–3 rolled.

***d12 -> *d10 -> *d8 -> *d6 -> *d4 -> screwed.**

Roll to use supply once per week per person. Running out of supplies kills fast. Nomads target pack and draft animals.

ENCUMBRANCE

Encumbrance is usually a pain. I suggest this fix: each hero has one inventory slot. Small stuff takes no slots. Adventuring gear takes one slot. *d4 supplies also takes one slot. Any hero carrying more than one thing is encumbered. That is bad.

Heroes should have baggage trains and shit.

SHOP: GRASSLAND ESSENTIALS

1. *d4 supplies of dry dwarf bread, water, hempen cloth, wrapping rag. A hero cannot heal on dry crumbs and water. 1 slot (2 cash).
2. *d4 supplies of tinned meat, travel ale, disinfectant schnapps, novelty items, rough newspapers, socks, gum and prophylactics. 1 slot (10 cash).
3. UV Grassland Walker Kit: Toiletries, zinc sunscreen, tent, sturdy walking stick, Green army knife, sombrero, mustache wax, kangaroo bag, schnapps and wineskins, nifty cord belt and a backpack with one inventory slot. Dropping a shouldered backpack takes 1 action. 1 slot, (20 cash). *Yes, a hero with the full wilderness survival kit and a full backpack of food is encumbered. No surprise there.*
4. Anti-something snake oil: crap against venom, bugs, parasites, disease, rashes, blisters. Surprisingly, actually works. Small, *d8 doses (1d6 x 10 cash).
5. Violet city healing potion: restores 2d6 hit points or 1d6 ability points, er, stats. Small, *d4 doses (2d6 x 10 cash).
6. My First Archaeologist Kit: shovels, picks, sacks, ropes, buckets, brushes, pith helmets, more mustache wax, shiny boots, notebooks, and lamps. Everything a budding tomb raider could want! 1 slot (100 cash).
7. Adventure Kitchen: portable stove, samovar, canteen, cast iron pots and pans, oils, salts and spices, ladles, tongs, knives, chopping blocks and more. No more eating raw game! 1 slot (100 cash).
8. Naturalist’s Portable Laboratory: jars, flasks, pins, boxes, nets, scalpels, prods, pens, brushes, paints, notebooks, easels and the like. Perfect for the budding amateur biomancer. 1 slot (100 cash).

SHOP: MOUNTS AND WAGONS

1. Disposable encumbered slave, pony, mule or camel. 2 inventory slots (50 cash).
2. Proper heroic damn horse, charger. 2 slots (150 cash).
3. Impressive velblod camel. 3 slots (300 cash).
4. Small wagon or rickety coach, and a draft animal. Wagons are slow, vulnerable, heavy and dumb. 6 slots (200 cash, mule included).
5. Solid coach or wagon. 12 slots and two draft animals (600 cash, ponies included).
6. Biomechanical beast. Only available if you know the right Satrap or Prince, otherwise dream on. These glass-headed beauties ain’t for tramps. 4 slots (600 cash).

“Mount up! There’s wonders and silks and chem stims on that ultraviolet road!” P.T. shouted.

SHOP: GUNS

It wouldn't be a silly pseudo-colonial-apocalyptic savanna-crawl without guns.

1. Prince pistol, 2d6 damage, mid range, reload *d10 (200 cash).
2. Cat rifle, 2d10 damage, long range, reload *d8 (300 cash).
3. Satrap gun, 2d12 damage, long range, reload *d6 (900 cash).
4. Redland District SMG, 2d6 damage, mid range, burst, reload *d20 (400 cash).
5. Vome slagger, 3d6 damage, long range, frag, reload *d4 (900 cash).
6. Ultra blaster, 3d6 radiant damage, mid range, blinding, reload *d20 (900 cash).
7. Blue blaster, 4d8 necrotic damage, short range, burst, *d6, (900 cash).
8. Inquisition squirtgun, 1d6, mid range, intravenous, reload *d8 (200 cash).

Blinding: if any of the damage dice on a blinding weapon deal maximum damage, the target is blinded for one round. Critical hits with a blinding weapon cause permanent blindness (Dex save DC 8 + proficiency bonus + attack bonus).

Burst: drop one usage die, then roll. Area damage in 10' cube, Dex save DC 15 (or 8 + proficiency bonus + attack bonus) for half damage. Before damage is rolled, as a reaction, targets can sacrifice their move action to dive for cover. In cover they take half damage, none if they make their save.

Frag: a frag gun is charged with epic energies beyond mortal ken. Enemies killed with a frag weapon explode and deal 1d6 damage to all adjacent creatures.

Intravenous: rounds can be loaded with liquid toxins or holy water or whatever.

Reload *dX: when a gun is out of ammo, it takes an action to reload. A full magazine gets the listed usage die. As a rule of thumb, let ammo cost one tenth the cost of the weapon. Where ammo is scarce, increase the cost.

SHOP: ARMORS

Some armors that are suited for the hot steppe climate might also come in handy.

1. Flowing nomad robes with padded bits, light, AC 11 + Dex (10 cash).
2. Ballistic linen suit, perfect for the gentleman adventurer, light, AC 12 + Dex (100 cash).
3. Synthskin protection suit, hot, protective, light, AC 11 + Dex (150 cash).
4. Cat armor, a tiny helmet and little silken cuirass that looks ever so cute, cat-sized, light, +1 AC (200 cash).
5. Dryland weave armor, from the cilli of special dryland coral hybrids, surprisingly cool, medium, AC 13 + Dex (max 2) (150 cash).
6. Biomech cool-suit combining synthskin over woven endoskeleton, and an uncanny vascular cooling and filtration interlink system, powered *d8, medium, AC 14 + Dex (max 2) (300 cash).
7. Spectral combat suit, combines Satrapy steel-glass scales with an environment maintenance parasite, powered *d6, protective, medium, AC 15 + Dex (max 2), disadvantage stealth (1,500 cash).
8. Porcelain walker suit, the best in princely technology with integrated intravenous administration system for healing potions, powered *d6, heavy, AC 17, disadvantage stealth (600 cash).

Hot: hot armor is bad in, well, a hot environments. After every exertion (e.g. a battle) in hot armor, the hero has to make a Con save. The DC depends on the heat, but let's say DC 8 + 2d6. On a failed save the hero gains a lovely disadvantage to attacks and physical checks (including Con saves) and needs to rest. Another failed save and the hero can start dealing with ability score damage.

All the armor in the default rulebook of the default game is basically hot. And quickly lousy and sweaty.

Powered: a powered armor uses some sort of magical source of energy, be it solar prayers, thermonuclear batteries, blood sacrifice or something else. Roll the usage die after every combat or significant exertion in the armor. An extra power source and protective cradle takes an inventory slot.

Protective: this is armor that magically provides advantage to saves against horrible environmental effects, from acid to toxic clouds, often with magical hazmat runes or post-mechanical breathing implants.

Hiring Help

D.W. rolled her eyes. Another useless lout. At least they would be done soon. If P.T. didn't accidentally stab another would-be guard while 'testing' their mettle.

D12 POTENTIAL HENCHMEN

Henchmen can become new heroes when existing heroes bite the dust. Let players roll the henchmen's ability scores as required.

1. Migo the Dark, horned cat, and his pet Jor leu-Gro (tough but slow). Curious, interested in new sights, a bit cowardly, *Minor Illusion*. 100 cash per week.
2. Lea the Fluffy, bad cat on hard times. Needs a pet. Friendly but very lazy, prone to misrepresenting the truth. Purr curse: *terribly itchy armpits*, Wis save DC 15. 60 cash.
3. Sim Cadmium, a lesser doghead with a raspy, mysterious voice, hood and a doleful past. Good tracker. 70 cash.
4. Merenk-Zero Running, an escaped poly-body drone rediscovering her identity, the neuroparticipation chip scars still visible under her ash-white hair. She is very flexible and can learn new skills at shocking speed (20% XP bonus). 40 cash.
5. Obritish Krat, a diesel-chugging dwarf, with burned beard and haunted eyes, talking of wire-gholas in a salt mine far to the east. Good with machines. 50 cash.
6. Malikraut Koza, a very short Orange-lander with a penchant for poetry, puffery, pomp and a bit of the old ultraviolence. Advantage on damage rolls when sneak attacking. 35 cash.
7. Glim, a silent, dark stranger in robes of odd refinement. Some whisper of a murderous barbaric past, others of inquisitor training. Iron minded (advantage on mental saves). 25 cash.
8. Od Broyden, scion of a Lesser Vintner house, out to scout new markets and make a name. Can haggle like nobodies business (1d6-2 x 10% discount on transactions). 99 cash.
9. Vigo Brastec, a hunter of rogue post-mortem laborers and currently wanted for certain undisclosed affairs back east. Bonus in combat with the dead. 20 cash.
10. Laud ah-Num, a dilettante from the Emerald City out to find the finest Blacklight Lotus. May be loaded or really poor, but still, dresses in dandy clothes all the time (intense fashion sense let's him increase his apparent net worth by a factor of 10). 60 cash.
11. Zika, a young un', wild eyed. Totally not possessed by an ultra ghost. Totally vicious in unarmed melee combat (1d6 damage, double criticals). 5 cash.
12. Lolar' de-Bruno, a half-savage ex-turnip farmer from the Green Land frontier with a bearskin coat and a flute. Probably not a werebear. 10 cash.



Who would hurt Vorgo?

Vorgo is healed and he snuffles mawkishly, “She’s a beauty, she is, and her father a chief, she says. A pearl is the bride gift he asks, she says, a pearl chiseled from a behemoth’s oyster parasite. So here I am, with my chisel and hangover, ready to enlist with the Princes as far as the Sarai, then on to the Behemoth ... I’ll manage somehow.”

1. In Vorgo’s wound is a sliver of silver. Does he smell a bit of wild beast?
2. Street urchins and cabbagewives would say he’d come to the township with a dog cage, but where is the dog?
3. Would the satraps stab somebody just to stop them from reaching their territory?
4. None of the cat people seem to care much about the map, they treat it as a joke. P.T. and the party would drop this annoying side quest here.
5. If pressed, the folks will ask, why go there? Only death and blindness await in that grassland.
6. Pushed further, they’ll mutter about mutilated travelers in the Rue des Oiseaux et Morgues (Cat-folk hostility +1).
7. At this point Violet detectives with fine white cats will start asking probing questions of strangers poking their whiskers in their jurisdiction.
8. After all, the bodies were just travelers, hardly citizens. But foreigners bothering the cat folk?
9. Yes, the doctor of mortices may have noticed the odd, parallel daggers used to mutilate the bodies.
10. Could those have been teeth or claws? Hah, only if someone had teeth like daggers!

Here, the trail would go cold (for now), nothing to indicate that any fantasy of vomes and ultra possession could have any basis in fact.

Vorgo the Were-Pug is shifty, cowardly, and foolishly loyal. But, if the truth is out, he also turns into a scruffy pug. This does not improve his combat or breathing abilities.

AC 13 (11 pug), HP 3 (1d6), keen smell, bug eyes.

Power: lycanthropic regeneration

Weakness: silver, oranges, endurance sports

Threat: is he possessed by an ultra scout beetle?



2. The Low Road and the High

The cratered viaduct of the High Road runs on crumbling pylons of dying dryland coral across the pallid grasses. Beneath the half-passable testament to the follies of the long-long-ago, the low road winds, smeared threads of soil and loam and oil and blood pounded into a hard surface by the pounding feet, hooves, wheels and treads of pilgrims, nomads, caravans, and mechs.

Weather: The sun clambers above the eye-watering purple haze around half-past nine. Hard gusts of flat air bring (1) flurries of ash, (2) sour rain, (3) burnt skies.

Misfortune strikes those who wander among the ruins of forgotten great civilizations (Charisma DC 8+1d6, roll d6):

1. luckless character sprains an ankle (+1 day).
2. lame beast (+1 day).
3. saddle sores (-1d4 hp).
4. lose 1 slot of supplies,
5. catch a rattling cough. Noisy, but harmless. A patent medicine (5 cash) should cure it.
6. bitten by a scorpion spider trying to make a home in a smelly boot (poison, Con save DC 3d6, disadvantage on physical checks for *d6 days).

DIRECTIONS

West, Porcelain Throne (safe oasis, a week): the cryptic mega-sculpture is encrusted with the dryland coral homes of the Porcelain Princes. A ring of Columnar Defence Golems stands guard. Crude shacks of brick and C-beam form a rude town at the foot of Throne Hill. Two great serais stand testament to the uneasy peace between the Spectrum Satraps and the Princes. (p.XX)

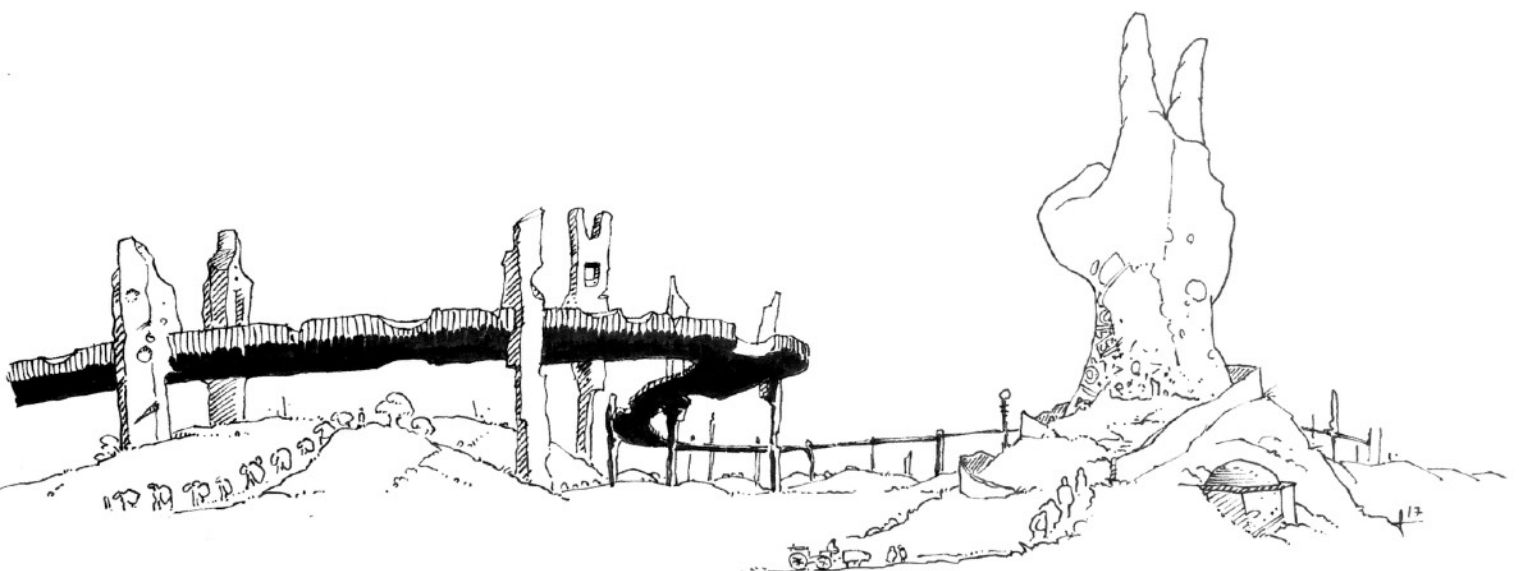
West, Potsherd Crater (local area, a week): the scrub beyond the Throne is pallid, the topsoil covered in drifts of porcelain exoskeletons from a deeper time. The three limey clans of the Green Tangerine, the Yellow Lime and the Verdigris Lemon graze and trade in spring and autumn. (p.XX)

North, Steppe of the Lime Nomads (steppe, a few days): harsh lands, forbidding to travelers, dotted with odd remnants of the best-forgotten ages. (p.XX)

East, Violet City (road, a week): back to the Rainbowlands. The city of the Catlords and their drugs. (p.XX)

ENCOUNTERS (D6)

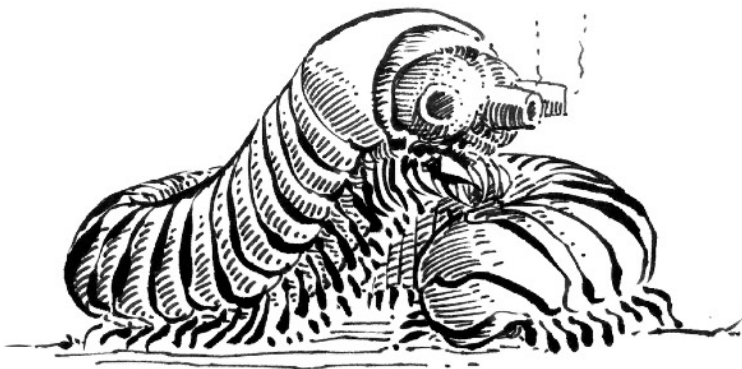
1. Swarm of ultra-possessed prairie dogs, frothing as the dread mechanical ghost corrupts their neural matter. Utterly savage and lethally infectious, but confounded by climbing on a rock and waiting for the infection to liquefy their brains (1 or 2 days).
2. Feral steppe hounds scavenging for weak prey.
3. Rainbowlander caravan with hundreds of beasts, escorts and cargoes of dry fruits and rainbow silks.
4. Great porcelain walker and its trinity of princes, escorted by eunuch slaves and beasts.
5. Satrap clock wagons in a column of gay colors and glistening glass crenelations that admit no faults.
6. Helpful wandering serai in the later Corpsepaint Monarch style offers security, resupply and the old greenlander veteran **Beauregarthe** (Fighter 3, AC 13, machete, Cat rifle). Beauregarthe can be hired for 60 cash per week.



Exploring the Roads

Rusted Hand (+1 day, 80 XP): a victorious hand rises from the hardpack, covered in graffiti. It is near the roads and a popular picnic platz for decadent aristo maidens seeking a suitably gothic and melancholy oil depiction of themselves. Slight danger of monkey mechs.

Crystal Pylon (+2 days, 150 XP): a voluptuously whorled crystal pylon lies on its side in a heavily eroded crater, the sides covered in a riot of perfumed mind-altering brambles. Nomads say it transforms memories into life. This is true (touch with forehead, lose 1 point of Intelligence permanently, gain 1 hp permanently). Ultra possessor at night, **millipede mechs** during the day.



Potsherd Crown (+2 days, 100 XP): the rim of an oddly even hill rises white and pale, like a great crown of deep porcelain. Remnants of quarries from before the days of the Porcelain Princes lie abandoned to vomish lurchers, while sanguine porcelain prospectors whisper of wormy holes at the far rim.

Wormy holes lead into the depths. There are d4 to plumb:

1. a great large hole leads to the dust-covered exoskeleton of a great ultraviolet worm, dead for decades. Chittering **spider-rats** and **bat-scorpions** have proliferated. A day's excavation would dig up 2d6 crystal worm teeth (1 slot and 100 cash each). Good for making crystal swords and spears and stuff. Epic.
2. a dryland sponge-ridden hole leads to spore fields, skin parasites and several totally not elven skeletons.
3. a slick, polished hole leads to a slippery, tangled knot of passages and chambers occupied by a family of **green slime worms**. The worms are (d6): (1) all gone, (2) all dead and rotting, (3) pupating into some kind of vomish thing, (4) asleep? dormant? (5) mating, (6) ready to ambush invaders and slowly digest their delicious bones with their slimy skins.
4. a fake worm hole leading to an archaic, forgotten cache of ammunition and indigo ivory furniture (2d4 slots, 1,500 cash).

Motor Agate Outcrop (+2 days, 2d8 x 10 XP): a gorgeous, striated ridge, leftover from some incredibly aesthetic geological process. Fragments of rare metal skeletons are embedded here and there in the outcrop, lending credence to the Citadel theories of an ancient period when creatures with living flesh over metal endoskeleton were the evolutionary norm. Cowled, back-jointed archaeologists sometimes prowl the outcrop.



Sealed Gate (+3 days, 250 XP): a cratered arched gate in the Onion-and-Skull style of the Later Mahogany Reign slowly emerging from its aerolith tomb. Sages say it was entombed by with an epic application of *Zrakomlat's Air Becomes Stone* in the Year of the Seven Wars. The petrified bones of strange beasts continually emerge from the light, fluffy stone of the area. Heavily covered in graffiti, risk of artist dilettantes and the occasional meta-skeleton.



3. Steppe of the Lime Nomads

The limey nomads' lands are harsh and dry, forbidding to travelers, dotted with odd remnants of that misty period that the Saffron City's Opiate Priests refer to as the best-forgotten ages. In Spring the limeys graze west towards the Grass Colossus, returning east to the Circle Rim for winter.

Weather: Every morning the purple haze occludes the sun until 8:30 or so. A dull drizzle gets in the eyes and cinnabar ash burns the tongue.

Misfortune (Charisma DC 10+1d6, roll d6):

1. Unfortunate hero sprains shoulder (+1 day).
2. lose a beast to a pack of wild dogs (+1 day).
3. get a bladder infection (-1d4 Str).
4. infested with ash-lice (-1d4 Wis).
5. metal armor has rusted (-1 AC bonus).
6. red eye from the irritating dust (-1d4 Dex). Preventable with proper eyewear.

DIRECTIONS:

West, Potsherd Crater (local area, *d4 weeks): drifts of shattered porcelain exoskeletons knitted with tufts of white, ropey grass. (p.XX)

West, Porcelain Throne (safe oasis, *d4 weeks): the cryptic mega-sculpture is encrusted with the drylands coral homes of the Porcelain Princes. A ring of relatively well-maintained Columnar Defence Golems protects this haven of trade. (p.XX)

South, The High Road and the Low (road, a few days): crumbling pylons of dying dryland coral tower above the half-passable modern road. (p.XX)

East, Violet City (steppe, *d4 weeks): back to the Rainbowlands. The city of the Catlords and their drugs. (p.XX)

ENCOUNTERS (D6)

1. **Vomish clackers** rattle in the dark, shadowing and whining, hurling rocks and bolts. By day they burrow into the ash and follow at a great distance, their glass telescopic eyes and re-engineered limbs keeping to a steady, slow trudge. At night, if lights go out, they hurl themselves in and try to haul one or two victims off into the dark. Half of their victims are abandoned as suddenly as they are snatched, unharmed save for scratches, bruises and a fear of the dark.
2. **Mind-burned megapede** shaking the ground on its odd journey, corundum encrustations glittering on its massive segmented neural nodes.
3. Herd of **horned horses**, wary of the two-leggers.
4. Great **armadilloids** (small, tough, semi-sentient) excavating a new communal burrow.
5. **Limey scouts**, suspicious but at ease in their own land.
6. **Limey matriarch's clan**, her herdsmen, chattel, herds and wagons on the move for better grazing. This could be a trading opportunity!

Telescopic eye, Vomish (implant): one thing all researchers of the worlds below and above agree, despite being abominations in the eyes of the Rainbow Lord, whichever heretic designed the first vomes of the Ultraviolet Grassland, gifted them with exceptional optics. Vomish eyes are prized by technomancers and biomancers alike (1d4 x 100 cash for a well-preserved eye). Implanting them is a dangerous process that does improve vision, but requires a life-long regimen of healing rituals, prayers, and vital mech-suppressant salts (5 to 10 cash per week). Used in optical sights, microscopes and telescopes, they are far less dangerous.



Exploring the Steppe

Spring of the Yellow Water (+2 days, 170 XP): the Lime clan hold this holy spring in great esteem, hidden as it is in a narrow ravine littered with long-long-ago skeuomorphic depictions of everyday life rituals. The yellow waters burble out of the sacred cleft and collect in a nearly bottomless pool. The water is considered a potent restorative (it is true), especially when mixed with black-light lotus (nonsense).

Depths of the Spring. Over a thousand feet deep, the lower depths are filled with vicious wire-and-bone biomechanical fish and abyssosaurs.

At the bottom, 11,000 cash of offerings: bronze and gold and crystal, from swords to cannons. Each individual item takes 1d6-1 inventory slots and is worth 1d10 x 100 cash.

Beneath the offerings a sacred machine fetish of a half-forgotten proto-deity, nameless now.

The outflow is subterranean and leads to the Cave Octopus' Garden (a journey of 1d6+2 days in the dark).

Great Biomechanical Baobab (+1 day, 120 XP): famed in the tales of the Green Tangerine clan, the biomechanical tree is an unbelievable sight, dominating the plain. It secretes oils that lubricate machines and cure aching joints. They say there is an artificial dryad resident in the great tree's slow-brain.

Verdigris Ribs (+3 days, 200 XP): the great ribs of a gargantuan sesquipedalian beast rise, cut and polished as by a grim blade, turned into a crude henge. They are coated with centuries of painted prayers and Felix Whizz, until they glow bluish-green come day or night. Lemon clansmen make offerings of meat and drink on odd nights, and the occasional human sacrifice brings

great fortune (*d8 advantages on rolls) or restoration (two weeks worth of long rest in a single bloody orgy). Vomeres reported at daybreak and twilight.

Cave Octopus' Garden (+5 days, 300 XP): deep in the photo-lume limestone karst the piled debris of the Long Ago aggregates in half-fossilized deposits. A spherical cavern, 900 feet across, left by the accidental detonation of an ancient combat ritual, is home to the Cave Octopus AC 14, HD 16, huge, doddering, kind; Powers: neural whip tentacles, biomantic rituals; Weakness: photophobia, convinced the world has ended.

Biomancer extraordinaire, the Cave Octopus replaced his human body with a many-tentacled form adapted to survival in the dark, nutrient-rich broth of the Yellow Water. Given time and raw materials, the Cave Octopus can recombine a new and better body for a hero.

The garden is rich with fat, blind snakes that feed on a variety of slimes, aquatic fungi and nutrient filtering crustaceans. Hiding under rocks and algal mats are a number of the Cave Octopus' bio-modified children: half-mad body horrors it has created from the occasional human sacrifice.

Rummaging through the debris and biomantic stores reveals *Ancient and Arcane Biomantic Equipment and Supplies from Long-long ago* (8 slots, 5,000 cash).

A subterranean stream leads up to the Spring (2d6 days) and down to the Cryptich (1d6 days).

Cryptich of the Craquelure Queen (+4 days, 250 XP): a jagged gash of an eroded canyon reveals odd offerings (vomish) at several ancient cerametal stumps, the remains of a long dead ventilation system.

Underground is a labyrinth of barely accessible corridors and ways, where ash and dust falls oddly. Pits and deadfalls are the only hazard. Dead security golems creak and crumble.

At the core is the Cryptich, a glass and ge-yao three-layered crypt protecting a **biomechanical queen** (AC 17, HD 5, ancient) with a field of *Sudden Entropy*, a curse of *Immediate Tissue Liquefaction* and a charm of *Service to the Queen*.

The queen is confused, but not hostile. Her biomechanical implants are worth 4,000 cash (1 slot).



4. The Porcelain Throne

The four robed figures turned their faceless glazed masks as one to face P.T. and the band.

“This stair leads to the High Houses. Only the permitted penitents may ascend to serve us there. Stay back, our Pillars of Power remain as potent as in your forgotten Long, Long Ago,” they spoke in an impeccable chorus of disparate voices.

Weather: Grim violet haze till 9 o'clock. Light swirling dust storms, hint of cinnamon on the breeze.

Misfortune (Charisma DC 10+1d6, roll d6):

1. horrible blisters (limping),
2. beast found with seventeen two-inch cubes cut out of its flesh, it is severely weakened (+2 days or leave it behind)
3. nasty nettle burns (-1d4 Dex)
4. sat in an ant nest (-1d4 Cha)
5. ripped pants on some cinder slag
6. get red eye from the irritating dust (-1d4 Dex).

Expenses: 3 cash per week for slaves, 100 cash per week for respect.

DIRECTIONS

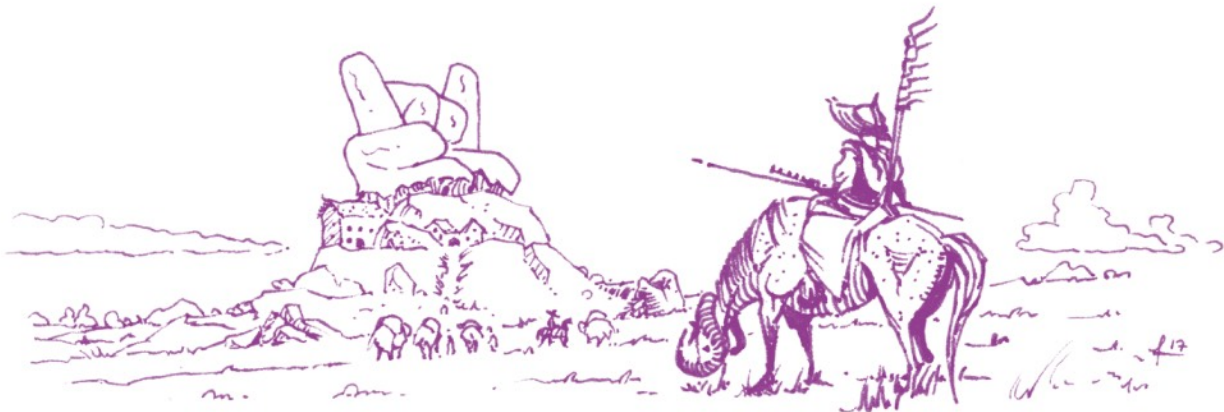
Vicinity, Potsherd Crater (local area, a couple of days): the scrub around the Throne is pallid, the topsoil covered in drifts of porcelain exoskeletons from a deeper time. The three limey clans of the Green Tangerine, the Yellow Lime and the Verdigris Lemon graze and trade in spring and autumn. (p.XX)

North-West, Trail to the Grass Colossus (trail, a week): a dangerous journey through the nomads' luminous lands winds towards their holy site: the Grass Colossus. (p.XX)

South-West, The Last Serai (trail, a week): the Porcelain Princes' hold, home to the most remote permanent Rainbowlander trading post. The prices are as eye-watering as the obscure penal code. (p.XX)

North-East, Steppe of the Lime Nomads (steppe, *d4 weeks): harsh lands, forbidding to travelers, dotted with odd remnants of the best-forgotten ages. (p.XX)

East, The High Road and the Low (road, a week): crumbling pylons of dying dryland coral tower above the half-passable modern road. (p.XX)



PLACES IN PORCELAIN THRONE

Black House: a lakeside club for the rich and conservative out for a bit of fun-time decadence and rapid tanning.

Broken Line: excreted out of the Throne, slave barracks for the bodies that have broken in service of the Porcelains. Some have regained the rudiments of consciousness, but most are mere dumb beasts waiting for the nutrient teat and the vivimancer's knife.

Column Defense Golems: immobile death laser golems.

High Houses: embassies, certain merchant houses, and the workshops, barracks of the Porcelains' Eunuchs, and the tunnel-villa-complexes of the distributed personalities. In secure, mosaicked bunkers, princely polybody backups are stored, maintained and improved.

House of the Unbowed Cardinal: nomad grass cult enclave and hottest BBQ in the West.

Houses of Many Colors: half-dugout homes and workshops of Rainbowland affiliates and other scum.

Lowest Line: shacks of dead coral and brick for the outlanders with no affiliations, not quite slaves. Yet.

Onion Dam: an ancient dam, neatly kept. Good fishing.

Orchards: the luminescent velvets and cherries of Porcelain Throne are said to be a panacea when distilled into the fabled Vavilov-Cherenkov vodka.

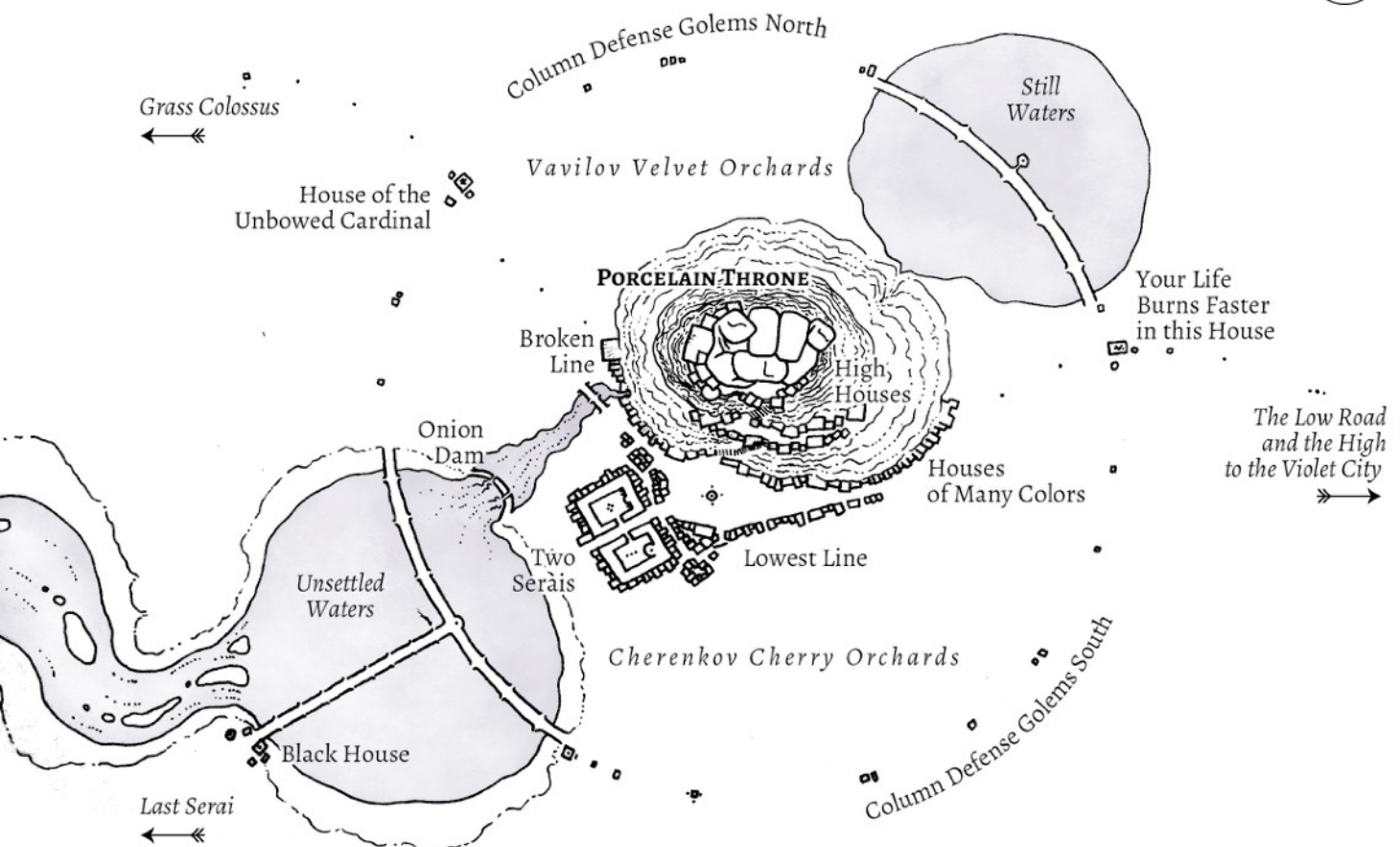
Two Serais: the barely peaceful truce-homes of the Satraps and the Princes are dangerous for non-aligned wanderers.

Waters, Still: an eerily still lake, home to great steppe eels.

Waters, Unsettled: regular lake. Frogs, geese, ceramic crabs, porcelain perch. Totally regular. No stone octopus.

Your Life Burns Faster in this House: a radical house, known for loud music, louder politics, and a cellar that is *that* kind of dungeon. Nudge, nudge.

PORCELAIN THRONE IN THE POTSHERD CRATER



FACTION: PORCELAIN PRINCES

The porcelain princes are not-quite-liches, but they seek immortality just like those wizards. They have spread their vital cognitive essence among several bodies linked by real-time glandular psyche-to-psyche links. They are not more intelligent than before, but the additional bodies make them more resilient to damage, and by adding new bodies periodically, they ensure a mental continuity across the aeons. Obviously, this continuity is flawless and perfect. So they say. Obviously.

The Link is glandular and has a limited range, the exact range is uncertain, for this reason polybody princes do not like to send individual bodies too far by themselves, in case they go rogue, or even try to take over the original sentience on their return. Groups of three or four are more common to reduce the risk of personality collapse.

Conservative to a fault, the princes maintain their oldtech porcelain walkers religiously, but often without the necessary understanding to upgrade them or jury-rig them if they fail. They view all upsets to the status quo (them and the Spectrum Satraps in charge of most trade between the Black City and the Rainbowlands) as a problem to be crushed.

The princes **trade** exclusively to maintain their lavish holds and homes. They are always on the lookout for neuromech and biomech parts, and luxury goods.

6 DISTRIBUTED PRINCES OF THE PORCELAIN THRONE

1. **Many Cracks 5-body** are the distributed 5. personality primate of the Conservation Society. They have an id-devouring fascination with Rainbowland rumors and Near Moon ultras possession magics.
2. **Celadon 10-body** are the father of the Mollusk Appreciation Denomination and want to bolster sentient dryland coral technology.
3. **Leopard Lithophane 4-dyad** are a confused participant in the Rites of Animated Teratology. They love shellfish but are secretly terrified of the vomes.
4. **Sherd 7-extension** are a noble and decayed Meta-ritual Oligarch that wants to turn back time to before the monobodies were allowed into the Radiant Lands.
5. **Black Pot 5-body** are a Radical Labor or Trade Cooperative, plotting the overthrow of the Evil Prevention Act of Meissen 13-unity.
6. **Bone Kaolin 2-body** are the decayed remnant of the Ascendant Church of Flesh. A death cult.

POLYBODY WIZARDRY

Heroes that get on the princes' very good side, or that break into one of their body labs, might be interested in exploring the polybody lifestyle.

An additional body requires a (hopefully willing) body donor and at least 2,000 disposable cash.

Generate the physical stats for the new body (Str, Dex, Con) and list it as a second body. When the polybodies are in visual (or glandular) range treat them as having a single joint pool of hit points, but an attack for every polybody. Add an additional Hit Die for each extra body (you can limit the number of additional bodies to at most one per level). If a polybody is sent off on its own, the hero has to decide how many hit points to send off with it (roll a Hit Die if required). Area attack damage against polybodies are multiplied.

Heroes may also merge bodies and psyches, instead of outright dominating the additional body. In this case mental stats (Int, Wis, Cha) should also be rolled, and the better results chosen. This may result in significant personality change, up to outright domination of the original body (and class change and so on). Be careful if your hero has an Intelligence of 7 and a Wisdom of 5. Eh, what am I saying. That hero would totally go for it.

A polybody is essentially a psyche-to-psyche linked henchman with unlimited morale, but still very fragile.

A COUPLE MORE NPCs

Jonky Bonko is a collector of unconsidered trifles and purses. Short and lean, he favors [poorly] coordinated fineries. He fights particularly well with furniture. Thief 3, AC 14, Power: furniture, Weakness: fine silks and a connection to the Purple Haze body-snatchers.



Syruss Sensible is a potentially retired freebooter now managing the *Your Life Burns Faster in this House* for the RDL Merchants Cooperative.

Thief 4, AC 12, Power: magic hats and sharp suits, Weakness: penchant for risky trading ventures, Threat: vome-in-a-box.



COLUMN DEFENSE GOLEMS

Immobile towers of power, force, and brutal futurism. Their pentagram eyes blaze with a united purpose, like axes of lightning and lasers bound in strength and unity. Their technology has decayed, they are covered in warning graffiti, but still they burn to protect the Circle from internal enemies.

Their *Death Heat Fire Lightning Ray* eyes scorch all violators and attackers within their circle and the fields around them are strewn with the bones of vomes and predators and drunkards who just wanted a wee bit of fun. Indoors, away from their eyes, violence is safer.

HD 12, AC 18, Atk +12 DHFL ray 4d12+12

Power: cleave against opponents with fewer HD than themselves, set targets on fire, *aura of nausea*, golem immunities.

Weakness: immobile and a bit dumb.

Threat: unknown pre-porcelain magic? Rocks from the sky? These things are ridiculously over-powered ancient cryptic defense systems! What could hurt them?

5. Potsherd Crater

Scrub. Pallid soils of crushed ceramic. Drifts of porcelain exoskeletons crunch and ring underfoot. The autumn and spring rain showers bring sudden blooms of flowers and tubers, covering the pale landscape in a rainbow of color.

The rim rises pale, like deep porcelain ribs, from the dusty soils. Remnants of quarries from before the days of the Porcelain Princes lie abandoned to vomish lurchers, while the sanguine porcelain prospectors whisper of lion caves in the far rims.

Weather: Radiant haze clouds obscure the sun before 9 a.m. Light rain showers, the smell of garlic and roses.

Misfortune (Charisma DC 8+1d6, roll d6):

1. infected cut on hand from sharp shard (-1d4 hp),
2. *d4 supplies pilfered by monkey-handed canids,
3. sat on a cactus (-1d4 Con),
4. hat blown away by sudden gust,
5. those pretty flowers in that garland? Totally poisonous (Con save DC 2d6), left a rash, too (-1 Cha),
6. ecstatically beautiful flower patch, could lose track of time here (+1 days, +50 XP, -2 Con from exposure).

DIRECTIONS

Vicinity, Porcelain Throne (safe oasis, a couple of days): the Throne rises, a gleaming testament to a civilization older than memory. (p.XX)

North-West, Trail to the Grass Colossus (trail, a week): a dangerous journey through the nomads' luminous lands towards their holy site: the Grass Colossus. (p.XX)

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North-East, Steppe of the Lime Nomads (steppe, *d4 weeks): harsh lands, forbidding to travelers, dotted with odd remnants of the best-forgotten ages. (p.XX)

East, The High Road and the Low (road, a week): crumbling pylons of dying dryland coral tower above the half-passable modern road. (p.XX)

ENCOUNTERS (D8)

1. **Vomish lurchers** (AC 14, HD 3, tough, slow)! A plot-convenient cloud of glittering dust dies down revealing a group of half-decayed biomechanical abominations. In the worst cases they are cable-linked to a **floating dominator** (AC 12, HD 4, phasing, neurotic), a tentacled, biological combat computer that vastly increases the lurchers' speed in a 50' radius (AC 14, HD 3, tough, fast). The lurchers are (roll d6), (1) hungry, (2) thirsty, (3) angry, (4) studying the clouds for odd reasons, (5) infectious, (6) confused like lobotomized cockroaches.
2. **Cave lions** (AC 15, HD 2, feline) on the prowl, not necessarily hostile. They want deer, not you, dear.
3. **Ceramic centipedes** (AC 17, HD 1+1, poisonous, swarm) looking for an easy meal.
4. Hard-eyed **nomads**, hostile to settled folks and wary of fire-water peddlers.
5. **Porcelain prospectors**, armed to the teeth, and (roll d6) (1) hostile, (2) terrified, (3) equipped with a bad map, (4) a good map, (5) fleeing a terrible vision, (6) exhausted but satisfied with their haul of sanguine porcelain (6 inventory slots, 1,200 cash).
6. Yummy grey **antelopes**. Very cute. Very tasty.
7. **Radiation ghosts** of a forgotten time, with willowy limbs and sparking black hole eyes, they point the way to odd remains (+1 day, digging required, 1d6 x 100 cash in ancient artefacts). Harmless themselves, but may lead through dangerous radiant magic zones (Con save DC 3d6 or poisoned).
8. **Porcelain Prince Patrol** keeping things proper, a place for everything and everything in its place.

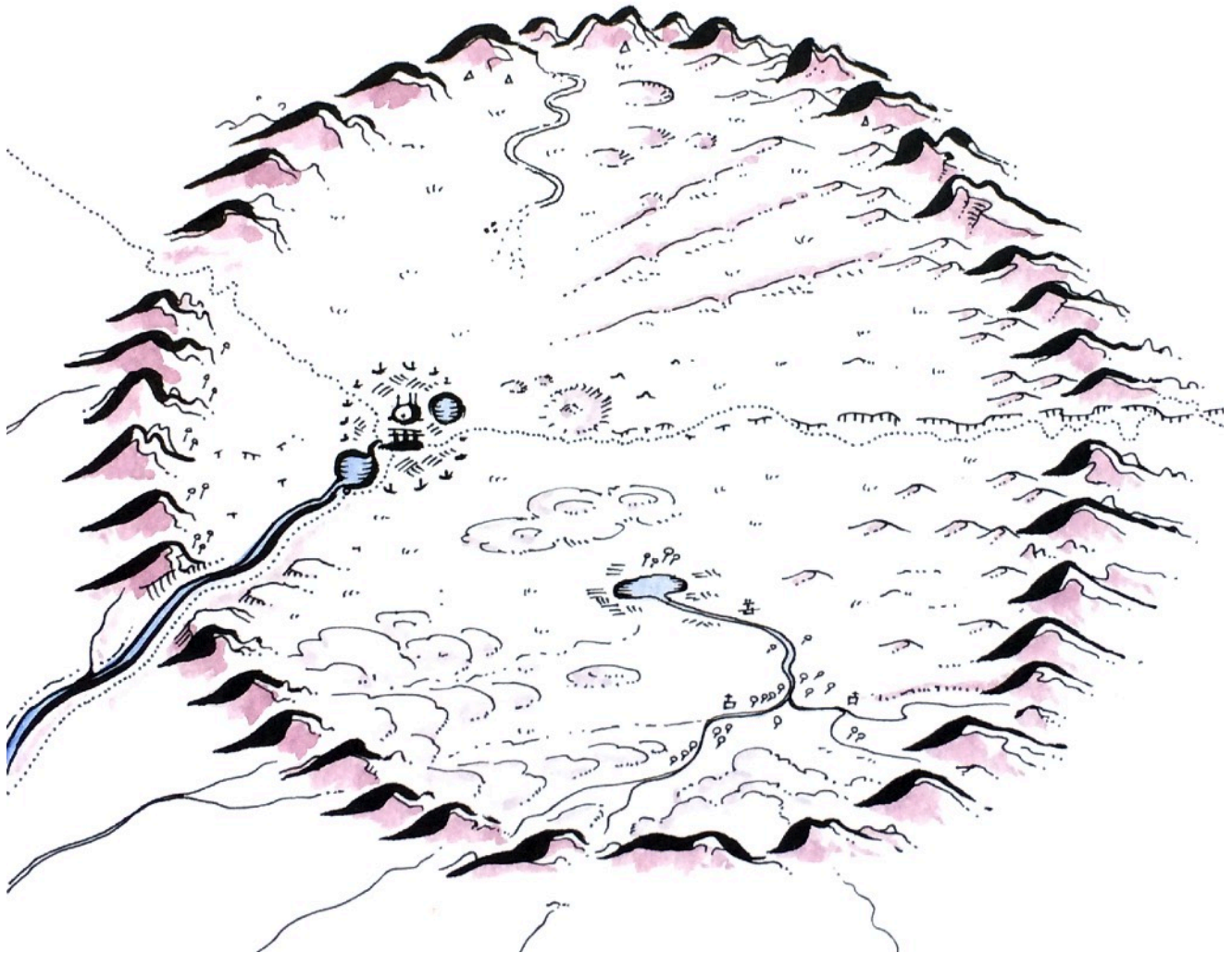


Exploring the Potsherd Crater

Waterlogged Quarry (+1 days, 76 XP): an old quarry, overgrown with thorny edible vines and sharp long-grass. Grotesque, **poisonous toads** (AC 10, HD 2) live in the waterlogged depths, but are easy to avoid. Useful sanguine porcelain can still be extracted (1d6 x 10 cash worth per day per person).

Glass House of a Dead Merchant Prince (+2 days, 160 XP): old steel-glass rococo arches, porticoes and gazebos sinking into sand and long-grass, wreathed in foul-smelling flowers (mildly hallucinogenic if eaten). Thoroughly picked-over, a haunting poem of a merchant prince's despair remains embedded in a folly obsidian dolmen, lamenting the cruel laborers and serfs who foiled the Prince's attempt to create the finest wines outside the Red Land. 4d8 **steppe wolves** (AC 14, HD 3, pack) may appear.

Mad Autofarm (+2 days, 2d10 x 10 XP): whether vomish or ultra or something else, is unclear, but this overgrown tangle of glass and dryland coral pulses with activity as small ceramic crab-like biomechs plow, water, till, weed and generally cultivate what looks like utter chaos of stone trees and plastic thorn-bushes. Closer examination reveals a profusion of odd fruit (1d6 x 10 cash worth can be recovered furtively, without alerting the Autofarm). Even closer examination is very dangerous, as the Autofarm can rapidly produce large numbers of **ant-body biomechs** (AC 16, HD 1d6, fearless, burrowing) to defend itself with talon, acid and venom. However, it is possible to find 1d4 entire replacement bodies growing in the depths, perfect for biomantic augmentation, neural replacement, or porcelain polybody transition (2d10 x 100 cash each).



6. Trail to the Grass Colossus

The grass grows high here, sparkling and lush. Watered by sacrifice and, rumor says, an ancient Source Fac, nomad clans come here when the grazing fails elsewhere, but even here they cluster in thornstone enclosures close to the trail, driven to cooperation by the deadly machine-infested giant beasts that regularly traverse the step here.

Weather: A dark mauve glow occludes the sun until 9:30 a.m. Dry, itchy, scattered biomech locust swarms.

Misfortune (Charisma DC 12+1d8, roll d6):

1. biomech razorfly swarm forces everyone to hunker down. Lose 1d4 days or 2d6 hp.
2. mount steps into a puddle of Source and suddenly undergoes violent source code corruption.
3. lost in the high grass. Lose 1d4 days, roll on Misfortune and Encounter again.
4. lost a shoe to a thirsty tangle shrub.
5. hit in the eye by a speck of windblown biomech garbage. Blinded in one eye.
6. infected thornstone wound. Lose 1 Con per day until healed (Cure Disease or equivalent).

DIRECTIONS

West, Grass Colossus (trail, north-west, a week): the nomads' holy site, forbidden to strangers in the times of the doubled moons. (p.XX)

South-East, Porcelain Throne (safe oasis, a week): the Throne rises, a gleaming testament to a civilization older than memory. (p.XX)

South-East, Potsherd Crater (local area, a week): the scrub around the Throne is pallid, the topsoil covered in drifts of porcelain exoskeletons from a deeper time. (p.XX)

ENCOUNTERS (D8)

1. **Lamarckian monstrosity** (AC 14, HD 18, self-improving, corrupt, decaying) a huge beast, its origin obscure in decay of its soul source, it nevertheless pulsates with creative energies, growing new limbs, armors, defenses and abilities whenever it is attacked. However, given a wide berth (+2 days), it can generally be avoided. It loses 1 HD per week, eventually collapsing into a copse of fast-growing UV bamboo.
2. Small herd of 1d6 **machine-infested giant beasts** (AC 13, HD 6, large, mutated, corrupt). The beasts were once (roll d4) (1) zebroids, (2) brontotheres, (3) elephants, (4) shaggy buffalo. The beasts, though mad, are not themselves dangerous. Their glittering metal tusks and claws are worth 1d6-2 x 100 cash each.
3. Copse of **thornstone shamblers** (AC 11, HD 9, grappling, thorny, resistant to damage). An unholy drystone coral out for the flesh of living creatures. Can be mined for thornstone seeds (500 cash).
4. A pack of **enhanced jackals** (AC 13, HD 1) singing their jackal songs and looking for psychobiotic mushrooms.
5. Scared **local herbivores**, several prairie pigs and a glyptodon, hanging out by a waterhole.
6. A group of nomads, they are (roll d6) (1) weakened by biomech assault, (2) corrupt sheep worshippers, (3) a noble lime clan taking sacrifices to the colossus, (4) a raiding party, suspicious and harsh, (5) celebrating a great lion hunt, (6) taking the ashes of an elder east for a sea burial.
7. A helpful trading party, they can share maps that will shave 1d6 days of a journey (50 cash).
8. The shattered remnants of a porcelain patrol returning from a raid. Probably destroyed by a tribe of giant beasts. A polybody sarcophagus still contains (roll d4) (1) a viable polybody clone, (2) a stash of gold novelty medallions (2 slots, 3,000 cash), (3) vials of octopus pheromones (work as *Charm Cephalopod*) worth 300 cash, (4) an active silver and jade domination implant (works like the old *Charm Person*).



Exploring the Trails

Savage Biomech Tribe (+1 days, 144 XP): living in wicker and metal trenches and tunnels dug into the prairie, the **machine-corrupted tribesmen** (AC 11, HD 2, resilient, cybernetic) have degenerated into pure savagery, kept alive by their self-repairing implants and hyper-normal reflexes. They have no culture to speak of, save an innate urge to bring blood and brains to their **Emperor of Humanity** (AC 6, HD 12, immobile, psionic), a pulsating, half-mad clump of bones, brain, and clattering teeth kept together by machines in a chamber five levels down. Surrounded by ancient artefacts (2d6 slots, worth 4,000 cash) and helped by a fully cybernetic uplifted ape named **Cornelius** (AC 16, HD 6, fast as heck, strong), the Emperor plots the next step in his galactic ambitions.

Eerie Pearl (+2 days, 2d100 XP): in a small crater on a small rise, almost obscured by the grass, a small haven of peace, where lions lie with lambs, dominated by a great alien pearl. The animals will protect it if attacked. It will charm characters with Int 3 or 4 to protect it. It will gift characters of Int 5 to 7 with 1d4 Wisdom permanently. Characters with Int 13 will suddenly gain the ability to levitate up to 2' off the ground for 1 minute after ingesting a pearl. The reasons for these boons will never be clear. Exploring the Trails Further

Fallen Iron Obelisk (+3 days, 3d10 x 100 XP): an obelisk, massive, rusting, covered in obscure Dark City glyphs. Did it fall or did the slave-train dragging it simply give up? It is unclear. The complex magical glyphs (Int DC 3d10 to decipher) contain instructions for the activation of a *Metal Guardian of the Darkness*, essentially a shadow-stepping Iron Golem. Half of the instructions are in the ground, and turning over the 10 metre, 500 ton obelisk, will be a challenge. The full instructions are worth 2d6 x 1,000 cash. By night, **biomech crab-dog swarms** come to perform eerie rituals near the obelisk. They are dangerous.

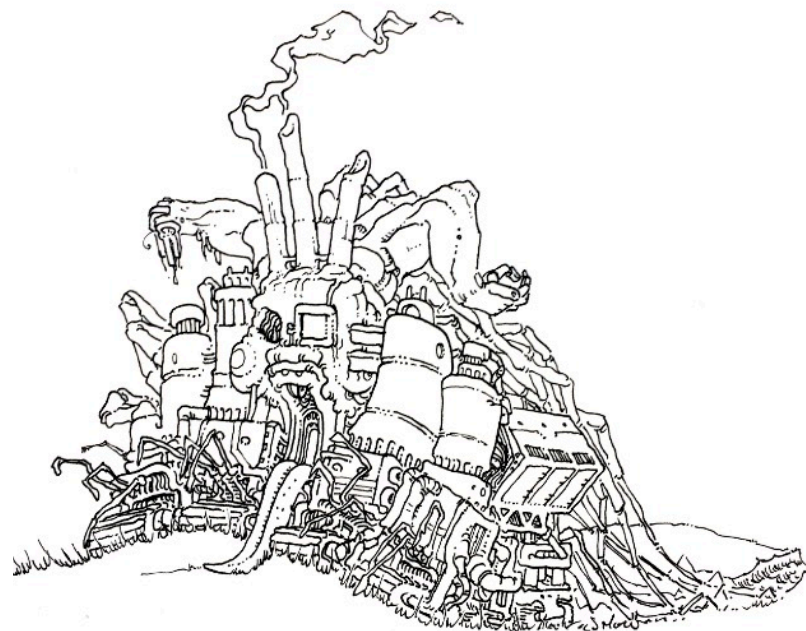
Source Fac (2+1d6 days, 600 XP): the carcass of a great, motile tower drags itself around on massive post-organic treads. Twitching tubes, pipes, and coils of bioluminescent synth-cartilage trail behind it as scurries about in the vasty Grassland. It's unclear what it consumes, but it leaves behind it a gouged scar oozing with decaying source juices. Over days and weeks the source corrupts the soul codes of creatures and plants left behind it, generating lush strips of mad, chaotic jungle that then slowly wilts back into grassland over months and years. Encounters are twice as common in this mad growth, and the tree-sized grasses themselves sometimes spear unwary travellers (**spear trap** or **spiked pit trap**).

The Fac itself is a biomechanical clattering obnoxiousness, interesting as an example of the Long-long ago biomancers' hubris. Lucky students may come across

biological seed matter, old rituals, or even the occasional uplifted servitor (like a familiar, but smarter, synthetic, and more mindlessly loyal). Various biomechanical defense systems, including **meat centipedes** (AC 12, HD 3, swarm, strip bones), **black metal spiders** (AC 16, HD 2, neurotoxin), **ropers** (AC 8, HD 4, sessile, entangling, screeching) and **brain-trust halfings** (AC 13, HD 7, swarm mind) guard against intruders. And, of course, there is the constant danger of source code corruption.

SOURCE CODE CORRUPTION (ROLL D6)

1. Over three hours the Fac turns animals into plants, plants into animals.
2. Creature is suddenly modified with (roll d4) (1) calcite armor plates (+1 AC), (2) chitin eruptions (spiny, does 1d4 damage when grappling), (3) bronze bones (+1d4 hp, disadvantage on saves vs. disease), (4) crystal nodules in the flesh (worth 1d20 x 100 cash, removal kills creature).
3. Limbs ripple and rearrange randomly, creature becomes (roll d4) (1) a quadruped, (2) winged, (3) tentacled, (4) a limbless annelid.
4. Full source code failure, creature becomes an ooze that retains its original Int and Wis. Ooze type (roll d4): (1) acidic green ooze, (2) vampiric red ooze, (3) pyrokinetic blue ooze, (4) self-regenerating grey ooze.
5. Bunny overload. Creature becomes (roll d4): (1) bunny-headed, (2) bunny-tailed, (3) bunny-furred, (4) a large, bipedal, sentient bunny.
6. Reassembly from source. All creature's ability scores are shuffled randomly. One random ability increases by 1d4.



7. The Grass Colossus

Crossing a last purple ridge, the wide vale promised respite from the harsh grassland. Trees dotted the courses of two rivers, and at their juncture prehistoric ramparts of pitted ceramic, traces of pre-wizard spell-arms on their ancient shellac surface.

Inside, on one of two hillocks, a great wicker-man of woven grasses, vines and thorn bushes. Shamans of many clans make their meets here, teach their memory chants, and welcome the clan mothers once a year for the festivals of the Circle of Grass.

Weather: A dark smudge of radiation stops any light reaching the ground before 10 a.m. Scudding lightning storms intersperse with strong winds and baking heat.

Misfortune (Charisma DC 3d6, roll d6):

1. lightning strike, DC 14 Dex save, 2d10 damage or lose a henchman or beast of burden.
2. dreadful winds slow progress, lose 1 day and DC 12 Con save or catch the dusting cough.
3. baking heat exhausts travelers, lose 1d4 Con.
4. baking heat and sweat means a bad saddle rash, lose 1d4 Dex.
5. slept in the soil of a radiation ghost, lose 1d6 Str.
6. bitten by a rabid steppe wolf, Con DC 10 save or diseased. Wis DC 15 save and three rations could get you a steppe wolf pet. Fears magic carpets.

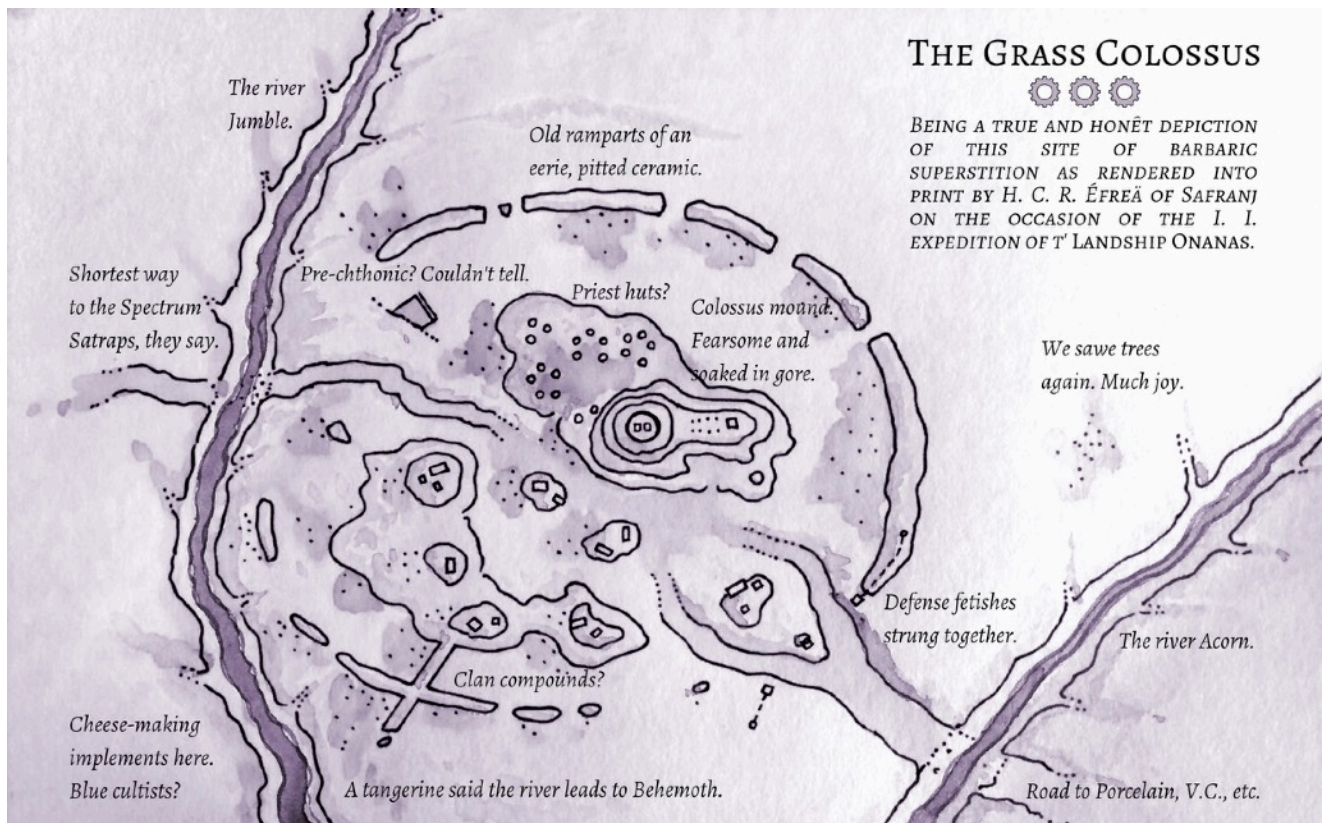
Expenses: 1 cash per week for free-folk, 10 cash per week for big-folk, 100 cash per week for a hero of the people..

DIRECTIONS

West, Serpent's Trail (trail, a week): the steppes deepen into that harsh, endless sea of grass. The true UV Grassland. (p.XX)

South-West, South Facing Passage (steppe, *d4 weeks): a rough country, torn by the tracks of prehistoric behemoths. (p.XX)

East, Trail to the Grass Colossus (trail, a week): a dangerous journey through the nomads' luminous lands towards the Porcelain Throne. (p.XX)



Madmen and clansmen (d8)

1. Mad priest *Urburt* of the Blue, tolerated for her mastery of yoghurts, poultices, and defensive slime molds. She screams of a great metal darkness eating the soul of the Spectrum Satraps.
2. *Shiver Citrus*, a bad shaman who loves songs and good tales, and offers curse-laced blessings and poisonous potions to outlanders. For the glory of the clans!
3. *Rattle Lemon*, a good shaman who believes the ultras have infiltrated the Porcelain Princes and are a serious danger to the nomad clans. If Vorgo is present, freaks out and returns with a posse.
4. *Strapping Young Lass*, a clanless maiden born in the mark of the blood dragon, out to clear her sign by traveling to the Behemoth and offering a sacrifice to the Bone Soul. Barbarian 2, AC 14. Power: fast, smart and adaptable, a true she-Conan. Weakness: loathes magic and wishes desperately to belong to a clan.
5. *Churgla Nekroponte*, a yellow-lander scholar researching the ramparts. Convinced they are a star chart leading to a lost library (false) and that their orientation holds a key to an ancient vault (true: the Near Moon Door, four weeks journey West). Thief 2, AC 11. Power: smart as heck. Weakness: badly addicted to Dog's Tail and only has *d8 doses left.
6. *Draganoga*, the judge of the Colossus, tough, old, with a golden prosthetic leg and a hatred of nonsense. Judges threats to the clan harshly, but offers bounties of salt, mead and safety for vomish trophies.
7. *Joao the Witch*, a greenlander halfer came here through a series of ridiculous misadventures. Now makes defense fetishes and is in a bad way over a pig that died a few days ago in a misaligned fetish incident.
8. Dead drunk, out of their mind, *Possum 5* and *Possum 6* are the last remainders of a broken polybody. Their stories are incoherent. Was there a power struggle? Is there a secret way into a Porcelain high-house? It's a mess, but they know where to find several rare sites (reduce travel time by 1d4 days, *d6 times). Getting this information out requires some deciphering (Int DC 15).

DEFENSE FETISH

In a ritual, the caster embeds some of their own body and spirit (Hit Points and Charisma) in an attentive wicker and bone fetish. The HP and Charisma stay in the fetish until it is destroyed or deactivated in a propitiatory ritual.

Weak Fetish (1hp and 1Cha) AC 12, HD 1, slow, shooting.

Fast Fetish (2hp and 2Cha) AC 14, HD 2, rushing, ripping.

Strong Fetish (4hp and 4Cha) AC 13, HD 4, punching, cursing. Surrounded by a weakening aura.

EVENTS AT THE COLOSSUS (D6)

The band rested and recovered in the safety of the cryptic ceramic walls, what could go wrong?

1. **The Colossus Dances** (200 XP): the shamans celebrate the life-giving moon by immolating the least-favored in the Grass Colossus' wicker-and-bone heart. A slave, or a very uncharismatic traveler (Cha below 7) is seized, stuffed with saffron and steak, and then burnt to death in the harsh radiant heart of the Colossus. The Colossus awakens (AC 10, HD 24, godly golem) and dances the night away with the cavorting golem. After the second hour of the night the clansmen all hide in their huts, for if there are no enemies afoot, the colossus may slake its hunger with a fat fool or a juicy jester. Participants in the shamans' celebration partake of the divine essence of the colossus (gain resistance to non-magical weapons for *d6 weeks).
2. **Barbecue by the Colossus** (100 XP): a great chief has adopted a new daughter and her ascendance is celebrated with six sacred sacrifices. Heroes may participate, if they bring a valuable sacrifice, and partake of the *Spores of Sensation*. Each participant may experience the touch of a steppe spirit (Wis DC 2d8), who will guide them in a decision or moment of need (advantage).
3. **Shaming of the Chiefs** (50 XP): the chiefs of the clans are paraded before clans and visitors, before being tied to an pre-historic yellow rock with bonds of silk. There they are mocked for their pretensions and reminded that all mortal folk are created equal: worms beneath the treads of the Sky Spirit.
4. **Sky Chariot Battle** (50 XP): shouts and whoops echo around the camps, as above in the sky shooting stars dart and zip. Lines of radiant light cascade into showers of sparks, and enterprising nomads take wagers on which of the sky spirits will win, the blues (40% chance) or the reds (50% chance), or whether they will birth a short sun (10% chance). Prayers and sacrifices might sway the battle.
5. **A Testing Week** (no rest possible): night after night, vomes come at the encampment. Once a few **biomechanical badgers** (AC 13, HD 3, burrowing), another time a great **fire-spewing red worm** (AC 12, HD 7, fire bolts), a third time a shambling **horde of headless halflings** (AC 11, HD 2, relentless), a fourth time **swarms of cactus-skinned steppe wolves** (AC 14, HD 3, thorny pack). The defense fetishes will be decimated by the onslaught, but a proactive patrol can find a great **iron self-driving chariot** (AC 18, HD 7, kinetic golem) with a **vomish mind-worm** (AC 8, HD 7-7, psionic) inside.
6. **Sacred Rainbow** (50 XP): a glorious sign of approval, small sacrifices and rituals with the shamans bring a chance of self-improvement (Cha DC 3d6). Successful self-improvement raises one ability of choice by 1.

8. The Last Serai

Three days out you sight it. A metallic stepped tower, glinting in the day, glowing a ghostly, coppery green in the night. Two days out you smell it, like cocoa. Soft, seductive. A day out you hear it, drumming out a rumbling staccato without rhythm.

Finally, closing to the tower you see a three buildings, like hunched old men, clustered in the lee of a cinder dune. Around the tower itself is a circle of gentle dust, floating in a massive static charge. Nothing living grows within that circle, but the last serai's grand old harmonic rods draw energy from that magical field, powering the great hold of the Porcelain Princes and selling power to the last trading house of the Violet City and the final embassy of the Spectrum Satraps.

Weather: Dark clouds build and cover the sky, threatening storms and worse. The light of the sun only creeps through the gathering dark after 9:30 a.m., but only in the afternoon does it glint from beneath the ale-dark clouds in the glowering sky.

Misfortune (Charisma DC 3d6, roll d6):

1. a princely toll is levied for semi-legal goods ...

Expenses: 4 cash per week for slaves, 100 cash per week for respect.

DIRECTIONS

West, Serpent's Trail (trail, a week): the steppes deepen into that harsh, endless sea of grass. The true UV Grassland. (p.XX)

South-West, South Facing Passage (steppe, *d4 weeks): a rough country, torn by the tracks of prehistoric behemoths. (p.XX)

East, Trail to the Grass Colossus (trail, a week): a dangerous journey through the nomads' luminous lands towards the Porcelain Throne. (p.XX)

16. Near Moon

Whispers only came to the Violet City of this oddity, a spherical moon come to Earth, suspended less than a bow-shot above the ashen soil of the Grassland. The mile-high sphere, dusty and cratered, mocks astounded travelers.

Weather: A blue-glow haze is the only light until noon, when the sun emerges, washed out and colorless, though its rays are fierce and burning. No water falls in the vicinity of the Near Moon.

Misfortune (Charisma DC 13, roll d6):

1. nauseated by the odd tides, lose 1d6 Con and Wis. ...

Expenses: 10 cash per week to stay in the Spectrum Lodge.

DIRECTIONS

West, Wilderness to the Ribs (steppe, a week): the dark-grass steppes return with a vengeance. (p.XX)

North-West, Moon to Spectrum Run (trail, *d4 weeks): a well-marked trail to the Spectrum Palace. (p.XX)

East, Wilderness to the Behemoth (steppe, a week): a desolate expanse reaches towards the great hulk of the dead Behemoth. (p.XX)

North-East, Passage of the Faces (haunted trail, *d6 weeks): the accursed faces of forgotten times glare west and travelers fear to raise their eyes lest those grim visages steal their souls. (p.XX)

NEAR MOON DOOR

Everyone in the UVG has heard the old tales that there is a palace inside the Near Moon, a precious hall of crystal and gems, priceless beyond imagining. Of course this is not true, as any sage would say.

But there is a door on the skyward side of the moon known to only very few, reachable by ropes and hooks and scabbling hands, round the weak gravity well of the suspended rock.

Somebody with directions to the door would find it in a day, one without would need at least 2d10 days to achieve the same.

What is the meaning of this?

These are parts 1 to 5 of the first extended WTF Expedition - a psychedelic heavy metal rpg sandbox module to take a group of blundering PCs into the depths of the Ultraviolet Grassland in search of wealth and booty to pay back their adventuring loans. Or some other reason. I'll probably add a table of reasons at some point.

The project is graciously supported by my patrons at <https://www.patreon.com/wizardthieffighter>.

I know I keep updating the UVG very slowly. Once a month or so. I can only say, it's because I keep trying to cram too much into each update. I will learn to make smaller and faster updates.

Luka Rejec, 22/03/2017, 22/04/2017, 05/06/2017, 06/08/2017, 12/09/2017

Wait! There's More!

Attached is the appendix in progress, which collects the rules and content in more detail. It is unpolished, but gives a nice bit of insight into how a rule-set gets styled and hacked together.

New in this edition is also a glossary, also in progress, that keeps track of various stuff in the UVG for you. Not many people like glossaries, and I'm warning you: this one is as unfun as they come.

Hello, Dungeon Master, and welcome. I'm Luka, a gamer, just like you. Not an all-knowing author beyond the pale, just someone who wants to make the most fun games I can. In this appendix I'm going to break the fourth wall and address you as one rpg DM to another. You know, folksy like.

I run most of my games these days with a 5E rules framework, but every game and adventure uses some bolt-on rules to make it tick properly. You know what I mean. Timers. Faction trackers. Resources that run out. But these rule hacks are often not explicit, which is a damned shame as I'm all for explicit rules and implicit setting.

This appendix of rules aims to make running the UV Grasslands a reasonably-not-horrible experience. All of the rules are touched on in the main text, but here I've collected them and elaborated on them.

Enjoy. -Luka

Dramatis personay

DM: that's you. You're the bass-player of this game. You're refereeing a table-top role-playing game, probably some kind of D&D thing. But this ain't a dungeon, it's a steppe. Still, it's cool. We're buddies.

Heroes are the player characters. Don't call them PCs. They're not police constables. They're out for adventure, loot and revolution. Also don't assume they're good. Heroes are not good, they're excessive and over the top.

Henchmen are all the scruffy followers and hangers-on knuckle-dragging along with the heroes. Let them have all the henchmen they want. If players want to promote henchmen into heroes, let them. To keep things moving, don't stat them fully, just generate as required.

Long-distance gritty realism

The UV Grasslands are big. They're mind-boggling and weird, sure, but first of all they are big. Vast and fucking empty. You know, like steppes are. And it's that emptiness that kills heroes, because that emptiness means there's no wishing well to drink from and no turnip farm to plunder.

Have you ever tried to run a hexcrawl from Jaca to Santiago de Compostella with 6-mile hexes? It's like 80 of the bastards! Go on, try it. Roll for encounters in every hex. I bet you'll be bored, and so will your players. So how do you make the grasslands feel big, while not making crossing them boring? Glad you ask.

Figuring that out is what this rules appendix is all about.

Usage dice aka. risk dice: *dN

Have you heard of risk dice or usage dice? They're a really cool concept that I first saw developed by David Black (*Black Hack*, v1.2, p.8) as the usage die and then expanded upon by Eric Nieudan (*Macchiato Monsters*, MMZero, p.4) as the risk die.

I use it in the narrower Black Hack sense as a die heroes roll after using a consumable game object (ammo, food, torches, charges, magic eagles,) to see if it is used up. They form a neat chain and I use an asterisk to mark them as usage dice:

***d12 -> *d10 -> *d8 -> *d6 -> *d4 -> screwed.**

A roll of 1-3 means the supply is reduced and the die is downgraded to the next lower die in the chain. On a roll of 1-3 on a *d4 the supply is expended and the heroes are in trouble.

I wanted to call them consumption (or tuberculosis) dice, but I'll go with usage dice. Assuming you keep rolling them usage dice, you'll get this much 20 uses (on average) out of a *d20, and just 1.33 uses out of a *d4. See Table XXA: Usage dice.

TABLE XXA: USAGE DICE

Usage die	Average uses	Average total uses
*d4	1.33 uses	1.33 total
*d6	2 uses	3.33 total
*d8	2.67 uses	6 total
*d10	3.33 uses	9.33 total
*d12	4 uses	13.33 total
*d20	6.67 uses	20 total

A SOFTER WAY TO [USAGE] DIE

The original Black Hack usage die downgrades on a roll of 1-2, this makes for a softer decay curve. I prefer the harsher *d4 that says, "this is your last shot." But, if you prefer soft, here's the distribution. See Table XXB: Softer usage dice.

TABLE XXB: SOFTER USAGE DICE

Usage die	Average uses	Average total uses
*d4	2 uses	2 total
*d6	3 uses	5 total
*d8	4 uses	9 total
*d10	5 uses	14 total
*d12	6 uses	20 total
*d20	10 uses	30 total

Time: weeks and weeks and weeks

Use the week as the basic unit of activity. This will drive home how far things are. Don't worry about details like miles and leagues.

Also, use the gritty realism variant (5E DMG, p. 267). Use it. It is your friend. A long rest, that really heals up the heroes, should take a week. A short rest? A day.

If you want, you can tally extra days until they hit a week, but honestly, you can handwave extra days until you get into starvation / exhaustion territory.

Traveling between locations takes about a week. Heroes check their supplies once a week. You check for random encounters once or twice a week. Hunting and foraging takes about a week. The symptoms of dysentery last about a week.

Supplies: no rations or water-skins

Tracking supplies the classic way with pounds and packs, or even with slots, is too time-consuming and boring when the heroes are slogging across a giant savanna for months. I tried. It didn't make for a fun game.

Use supply usage dice to track supplies as an abstract resource that represents everything keeping heroes alive: beer, food, bandages, tents, and toilet paper. Like hit points for traveling parties.

Heroes roll a supply usage die **once per week per party member** that isn't a quadrupedal ungulate.

Running out of supplies kills

Roll a Constitution save instead of a supply usage die. **Success:** hero's physical stats are reduced by 6 and hero has disadvantage to all physical checks. **Failure:** hero is starving, physical stats are reduced by 9, mental stats by 6, hero is at disadvantage to all checks, movement speed is halved and hero needs to be carried over longer distances.

Repeat the roll every week without supplies. A hero dies when any stat reaches zero.

Cannibalising the expedition is the fastest way to get extra supplies. A human adds *d4 supplies, a pack animal adds *d8 supplies.

Foraging in the wilderness takes a week and each forager rolls Survival. Every success adds *d4 or *d6 supplies (50%).

Resupply in an oasis of safety takes a week and adds *d6 supplies per forager.

Making haste gives a +1 to the supply check, but also a -1 to the encounter check and disadvantage on the misfortune save.

Careful travel has the opposite effect. -1 to supply checks, +1 to encounter checks and advantage on misfortune saves.

Inventory: trucking is hard

Carrying lots of stuff long distances overland without a hover-wagon is horrible. That's why caravans trade in luxuries like silk and gold and slaves and drugs and tea and coffee. Lots of RPGs have stupid inventory systems, yet don't show how horrible carrying stuff is. So, I simplify things.

Each hero or henchman has one inventory slot.

Their adventuring or professional gear goes there. Magic skulls of memory for wizards, a year's supply of swordmaceaxes for fighters, golf clubs for the thief, whatever.

*d4 supplies is also one slot.

Carrying a person takes a slot, too. If your buddy is unconscious, it's a simple choice. Drag the food or drag the buddy.

This means that smart heroes have porters and pack animals. Stupid heroes walk around in full armour and haul their supplies in sacks on their heads. A character can carry one extra inventory slot worth of stuff, but it is encumbered.

Encumbered heroes are fucked. They have a -1 to the supply check, -1 to the encounter check, have disadvantage on misfortune saves and cannot make haste or travel carefully. They also have the regular encumbrance penalties in combat. Also, from a social perspective, they look like poor people. This is bad for appearing heroic.

Players are going to come up with weird justifications for how they are going to rig up rollers, ropes, and pulleys to drag heavy things long distances. This is good. Encourage them.

People, porters and pack animals

1. Human. 1 slot (1d4+1 cash per week).
2. Porters are tough-ass folks trained in the ways of packing and carrying stuff, preparing supply depots, and generally surviving in the wilds. 2 slots (1d6+7 cash per week).
3. Disposable slave. 1 slot (50 cash).
4. Pony, mule or camel. 2 slots (50 cash).
5. Slave porter. 2 slots (200 cash).
6. Biomechanical beast. 4 slots (600 cash).
7. Small wagon, rickety coach or swaying cart. 6 slots and a draft animal. Note that wagons are slow, vulnerable, heavy and dumb (200 cash, animal included).
8. Solid coach or wagon. 12 slots and two draft animals (600 cash, animals included).
9. Massive hauling wagon with four horses. 24 slots. This vehicle is slo-o-ow. Making haste or careful travel are out of the question. Running away from anything faster than a ground sloth will not happen. But, you know, it can haul tons of crap (1800 cash, animals included)

Dragging stuff: as a rule of thumb, using improvised stretchers, ropes, rollers or skids, a creature can pull double its slots.

Carting stuff: adding wheels is great, because the drag is reduced, letting a creature pull triple its slots.

People also need to eat. Driving a slave with minimal supplies (saving the good stuff for the heroes) has a 60% chance of killing the slave every week. A slave that survives five weeks of this shit and isn't freed should run away with the help of some noble wasteland spirit and become some kind of paladin hunting the asshole heroes.

SUPPLIES AND INVENTORY SLOTS

Remember, supplies also occupy inventory slots. How many is up to you (see Table XXc: *Supplies and inventory slots*), but I recommend you use the simple slots.

TABLE XXc: SUPPLIES AND INVENTORY SLOTS

Usage die	Simple slots	Complicated slots
*d4	1	1
*d6	2	2
*d8	3	4
*d10	4	7
*d12	5	10
*d20	6	15

Simple slots: Any number-crunching player that looks at the tables on usage dice will figure out that carrying a bigger stash of supplies is great, because it'll last longer as

the number of average uses goes up with the number of slots. Profit!

The way to deal with this problem is to rule that supply stashes can't be split and suddenly a large coach is required to drag that *d20 supply pile.

Complicated slots: it's not *that* complicated, but it means inventory management is going to take some time, and you have to use the *mathematics of shitty rounding*. That means, the final product of subtracting or adding stashes has to be equally or less favourable than the starting condition. I dunno, maybe the heroes spilled some salt and bread while repacking.

Subtracting or dividing stashes: When splitting stashes, always round down. So, a *d20 (15 slots) would split into a *d12 (10) and a *d8 (4), or into seven *d6s (2). In both cases, some supplies (a slot's worth) would be lost.

Adding stashes: heroes need to add together an equal or larger amount than the slots required. So, two *d8s only make a *d10 (1 slot lost), or three *d8s make a *d12 (two slots lost).

And I still don't suggest splitting stashes, because it will be a pain in the ass, and there is a reason a mule can only carry two slots.

FAIR WARNING: This rule will be reduced to just one over time for the final product, but in this appendix, I'm giving you both, so you can understand where I'm coming from.

What about my loot?

So the heroes come across a series of beautiful crystal sculptures with diamond eyes? Why do they hack out just the eyes? Space.

Any time a treasure or item is described with fancy words, add a slot for every word. Add slots for heavy materials, fine workmanship, intricate mechanics, cyclopean architecture. Just pile it on.

A hero (looter) can **hack out 1d6 + Charisma modifier percent of a treasure's value easily**. This usually reduces the value of the rest of the work by 10x that amount in percent.

That statue of the Metaphysical Insinuation of Being by the famous Jeerida the Artistique? Six inventory slots of glorious marble and gold worth 6,000 cash to a collector. Or, gouge out the gold bits for 300 cash. That's 5%, so the remaining defaced sculpture is now worth 50% less: 3,000 cash.

Yeah, looters are assholes.

Misfortune: because fuck your hero

The concept of Charisma comes from Greek, where it referred to grace and divine fortune bestowed by the capricious (asshole) Gods. This wasn't some lame approximation of "sexyness" or "leadership potential." Nope. This was straight up divine favoritism. A hero could be a complete dirtbag, but his divine mother dipped him in god ju-ju and gave him teflon skin. Others got the plague, he came through untouched. Others got scarred, he glowed with beauty and grace.

Charisma is utterly unfair, which is why I love to use it in games as a proxy for luck. You should, too.

In this expedition adventure, where each leg of the heroes' journey is a week of slogging through dull and unforgiving terrain, misfortune is that spike of pure annoyance or terror that kills unlucky travelers. Like scurvy or swamp foot.

When you spot a **Misfortune** section in the text, tell your players how it's been a harrowing week with horrible food, horrible company, rain and a couple of instances of worm-infested beans. Or whatever is implied in the misfortune text.

Then ask each player to roll a Charisma check or save against a relatively easy DC (I suggest 10 or 8+1d6). Each player that fails, gets to roll on the corresponding Misfortune table.

Yup, we're Oregon-trailing their asses.

Warn your players in advance that this kind of shit will happen in the adventure. If they take precautions, buy extra supplies, and generally take wilderness travel seriously, let them use their survival skills to help their roll or something, and explain to them that "the Gods help those who help themselves," or some nonsense like that.

Encounters

Finally, encounters. What’s the deal with encounters? I mentioned encounters when I talked about careful travel and making haste, advantage and disadvantage.

Encounters, are random shit that might or might not happen to the heroes, and they have two basic functions. For the players: they offer threats and opportunities for the heroes, and, primarily a way to burn through their resources. For DMs, the encounter is a way to add flavor and theming to an adventure or campaign above and beyond what the main story arc can deliver. They’re less than side-quests, they’re vignettes.

Now, sometimes full on encounters are fun, but if you try to run a long-distance journey and run into two encounters per day, and then have to run them as combats, that’s going to suck.

Checking for Encounters

You’re going to roll two six-sided dice. The first to see how intense the encounter is, the second to see what it is.

Huh? Wait? We’re not checking to see if something happens? Correct. It’s happening. At least once a week. Roll again every time the heroes spend a long time waddling around.

d6 roll	Intensity die	Encounter die
1	It’s on. Everyone is surprised. Fog, dark, whatever. Unless it’s an ambush, those are shitty.	Very bad encounter
2	Close. Avoiding the encounter is hard.	Bad encounter
3	Distant. Avoiding the encounter is easy.	Meh, could be worse
4	Clear tracks. Dropped garbage. Whatever. Easy to tell what it was.	Neutral
5	Faint tracks, hints of what passed.	Quite helpful
6	Cold tracks, just clues about the creature or encounter.	Helpful

As DM, pass a couple of scary-ass big six-sided dice (or whatever number of encounters you have readied. I prefer six) to your players and have them roll for their random encounter. So if they roll a dragon, it’s their fault.

In this expedition, most encounters are d6 tables. 1s and 2s are generally bad encounters, 5s and 6s are generally good.

Advantage and disadvantage: this is one of my favorite 5E mechanics. Simply roll twice and pick the higher result if you have advantage, and the lower if you have

disadvantage. Advantages and disadvantages cancel each other out.

Why so few encounters? Because you don’t need a lot of them. In fact, in live play around six is best, as it’ll theme individual areas more strongly. After the players encounter *fuckin’ bears* in the Arena of the Giant Trees for the third time, well, they’ll never forget it. It’ll always be the “*fuckin’ bear arena*” to them.

But encounters waste time!

Yes. Sometimes they do. Seriously, running into 2d6 angry limping zombies ambushing the heroes might be funny once, but if you’re on your way to the One Ageless Spire of the Only Onager, those zombies are boring. In these cases, use this rule:

Sacrifice to skip.

The heroes ditch some of their stuff and narrate how they overcame the encounter. If their story is funny, feel free to even dish out some XP or a bit of gold or something.

A simple method is to roll a supply die once for each level or HD of the encounter (e.g. twice to skip 2HD enemies, five times to skip 5HD enemies). Or something to that effect, this skipping method isn’t finalized yet, so it’ll change. Just have them narrate it, something like, this:

DM: “the mechanobear charges you from beneath the cinder crust of the mold-crust forest.”

Players: “oh, bloody hell ... we don’t have time for this.”

DM: “eh, it’s a 5 HD enemy, so five rolls.”

They roll under 3 four times, so they have to pick what to sacrifice.

P.T.’s player: “P.T. hamstring the weak old donkey to distract the hungry mechanobear.”

DM: “fine, the donkey is worth 2 supplies, and it’s carrying a load of food and water, that’ll do. The mechanobear seizes on the donkey and tears the sad and terrified beast apart as you make your escape.”

Poncho’s player: “Damnit! My good robes were on that donkey! Can I save them?”

DM: “You want to go back there and face the mechanobear? Alone!?”

Poncho glares at P.T.

Experience Points

XP are the life-blood of heroes. It's what takes them from regular schlubs to grotesquely over-powered extravagant tomb-robbers who hold the city to ransom in exchange for pretending to kill the dragon that they actually summoned themselves.

How do they get experience?

In the oldest versions of the role-playing hobby, experience was awarded for gold. Specifically, one piece of stolen ('found') gold was worth one piece of XP when dragged back to a safe town. In this kind of game, the focus for heroes was getting in and out of a tomb fast and with as much loot as possible.

Later editions added XP for defeating monsters. In the tactical game versions, XP was only awarded for *killing* monsters (like in action CRPGs). This, obviously, changed the game. It became about finding the high-value boss monsters and slaughtering them.

Other versions went for simpler things. Experience for participating in the game, experience for making other players laugh, experience for being the instant-pizza-baker, experience for completing a quest. Some games even did away with experience entirely.

Choosing how to award experience points changes your game experience. So what do I want to do with the UV Grasslands? I want to encourage exploration of a vast environment, trade and looting, but at the same time leave in some experience for surviving combat and doing cool stuff. How to do that?

Heroes roll after combat

One mechanic I like immensely is to let players randomize how much XP their heroes gain from combat, exploration and other nonsense. But especially for combat. As a rule, players roll after surviving a combat and roll bonus dice for defeating enemies and classy deeds.

1. survive easy combat 0 XP: those were mooks.
2. survive middling combat 1d6 x 10 XP: beat some goons of the lower caste liberation order.
3. survive hard combat 2d6 x 10 XP: slug it out with rough and tumble Juicer people.
4. survive deadly combat 3d6 x 10 XP: run away during a dragon raid.
5. victory +1d6 x 10 XP:
6. epic victory +2d6 x 10 XP: songs should be sung of this.
7. killing blow (fighter) +1d6 x 10 XP: make 'em go out and kill stuff toe-to-toe.

8. sneaky shit (thief) +1d6 x 10 XP: use traps, kill with a back-stab, lay an ambush.
9. wicked wizardry (wizard) +1d6 x 10 XP: use magic to heal, burn, flay, lay down some illusions or whatever.

As heroes level up, feel free to make things easier for them by increasing the die.

Exploring: experience for the new

This is my favorite kind of experience. Heroes find something new - they get XP. It's simple and to the point. It doesn't have to be entirely formalized, but I give out exploration experience points for discovering new places, creatures, plants, weird things and the like. The costs for exploring are usually time (additional days or weeks spent) and danger (additional encounter checks).

1. **Easy stuff:** observe a new monster or creature in the wild. 1d6 x 10 XP (or 30 flat). Doesn't take much time or effort.
2. **Effort required:** find and explore some remote place, find an uncommon creature. 3d6 x 10 XP (or 100 flat). Takes a day or so.
3. **This is weird shit:** wander off for several days to find an eerie reminder of times and places lost in the long long ago. Bring back a live specimen and study it in a lab. 6d6 x 10 XP (or 200 flat). Takes several days and may be quite dangerous.

Carousing: experience for cash

Carousing is a variation of the experience for gold rule. You can use it together with experience for gold, which lets heroes boost their XP higher, or as the only way to gain XP from gold.

I prefer the second variant, because it means that gaining XP from cash takes time. It also takes cash out of circulation, which virtuously encourages heroes to get back to pillage and plunder.

Carousing was first invented by Jeff Rients (<http://jrients.blogspot.com/>) and lets the DM easily and simply separate heroes from their treasure. The system I use is similar to Jeff's:

- (1) Hero blows 1d6 x 100 cash on a week of hard partying and gains that amount of xp.
- (2) Rolling more cash/xp than the hero has available means a nasty debt to a local cad.
- (3) In any case, the hero makes a Charisma save (DC somewhere between 10 and 15, say 9+1d6). On a fail, they roll on the local Carousing mishap table.

Bonus: a critical success on the Charisma save lets the hero carouse harder and party away another 1d8 x 100 cash in a single week. A critical fail means an extra roll on the mishap table.

Alternative: sometimes you'll find a player who doesn't want some horrible mishap happening to them, for whatever reason. Just let them lose the cash and gain no XP or half XP (pick a percentage, just be consistent). The Carousing table should be fun, not torment for players.

Cash

I went on at length about gold and gold pieces and cash and experience. Throughout the UV Grasslands I talk simply about cash. If you are playing your game with a silver standard, assume one cash is one silver piece. If gold is your standard, treat one cash as one gold piece. Simple.

But how much is one cash?

In most traditional role-playing games, I would now dive into the details of a faux-medieval economy, how much a peasant earns, how gold is used, and so on. That's cute. But no thanks.

I don't know for sure. One cash is about enough for one person to scrape by for one day. Maybe put a little by the side for a rainy day. Call it the mythical man-day wage.

That should put carousing with 600 cash into perspective.

You want more detail than that? Heroes who spend less than 1 cash per day on themselves look like ragged bums. The more they spend, the better they look. A proper aristo will be blowing through 1,000 to 10,000 cash per day. There's your scale.

Retirement

With all these experience systems, a question pops up: what's the end game? Just keep stacking up XP? So cash is just a way to buy XP? I think that's stupid. Infinite power and infinite gold are goals for boring, one-dimensional characters. For damned cartoon villains.

OK, infinite power in an RPG and the madness that entails, I can live with. But imaginary cash as goal in itself? That's kind of stupid. So why do heroes want cash? To retire from the game and do the stuff they've always dreamt of: buy a farm, build a chain of coffee shops, pay off their horrible debts, raise a mercenary troupe, hire an army to kill a dragon.

This should be explicit.

Retiring a hero successfully should be an achievement in itself, and should probably give a bonus to the next hero, perhaps unlocking weirder bonus classes, or just giving some starting boost or a powerful patron.

WILL ADD A LIST OF TABLES FOR "RETIRING HEROES" TO ROLL ON

List of Trade goods

THIS PART IS TOTALLY INCOMPLETE, BUT WILL BE PART OF THE CARAVAN GAME

1. odd fruits
2. the black light lotus
3. indigo ivories
4. rainbow silks
5. sanguine porcelains
6. vampire wines (red land)
7. livingstone bricks (yellow land)

Combat

This part is totally incomplete. Oh well.

GUNS

It wouldn't be a silly pseudo-colonial-apocalyptic savanna-crawl without guns.

1. Prince pistol, 2d6 damage, mid range, reload *d10, 200 cash
2. Cat rifle, 2d10 damage, long range, reload *d8, 300 cash
3. Satrap gun, 2d12 damage, long range, reload *d6, 900 cash
4. Redland District SMG, 2d6 damage, mid range, burst, reload *d20, 400 cash,
5. Vome slagger, 3d6 damage, long range, frag, reload *d4, 900 cash,
6. Ultra blaster, 3d6 radiant damage, mid range, blinding, reload *d20, 900 cash,
7. Blue blaster, 4d8 necrotic damage, short range, burst, *d6, 900 cash,
8. Inquisition squirtgun, 1d6, mid range, intravenous, reload *d8, 200 cash.

Blinding: if any of the damage dice on a blinding weapon deal maximum damage, the target is blinded for one round. Critical hits with a blinding weapon cause permanent blindness (Dex save DC 8 + proficiency bonus + attack bonus).

Burst: drop one usage die, then roll. Area damage in 10' cube, Dex save DC 15 (or 8 + proficiency bonus + attack bonus) for half damage. Before damage is rolled, as a reaction, targets can sacrifice their move action to dive for cover. In cover they take half damage, none if they make their save.

Frag: a frag gun is charged with epic energies beyond mortal ken. Enemies killed with a frag weapon explode and deal 1d6 damage to all adjacent creatures.

Intravenous: rounds can be loaded with liquid toxins or holy water or whatever.

Range: since I'm simplifying everything, range is also theatre of the mind. However, as a rough rule:

Range	Effect	Distance
adjacent	melee is on, ranged attacks and spells have disadvantage	0-2m
short	a character can cover a short distance and attack in the same round.	2-20m

Range	Effect	Distance
medium	a character can sprint to cover a medium distance in one round, but can't do anything else and is probably vulnerable to a counterattack	20-40m
long	at long range, it takes a character 2 or 3 rounds to close with a target. A target can easily keep its distance.	40+ m
far away	a target at this range is essentially too far to reach unless it wants to.	120+ m

Reload *dX: when a gun is out of ammo, it takes an action to reload. A full magazine gets the listed usage die. As a rule of thumb, let ammo cost one tenth the cost of the weapon. When ammo is scarce, feel free to increase the cost.

Glossary of the UV Grasslands

Still incomplete! Still a work in progress! What have I missed? What needs more details?

B

Biomancy: the wizardly art of sculpting flesh and bone and sinew to create living works. The burdenbeast is perhaps the most well-know example of the art.

Biomechanicum: a hybrid wizarding art that involves the melding of mechanics and flesh. Vomes are an example of advanced biomechanics, but common implanted prosthetics are readily available, from the chop-chop fixer (100 cash for a cold, grey hand) to the porcelain sculptors (2,000 cash for color-shifting chameleon glass dermal implants, popular with *artistes* and *burgleours*).

Blue Land of the Dead God: a flooded, festering swamp inhabited by diseased degenerates and haunted by the bleeding rotten ghosts of the Blasted Field. Cults regularly try to reawaken the Dead God, but generally fail. In the Blue Lands fermented dairy products and north walls should be avoided.

C

Catlord: sentient cats, beloved of the Violet Goddess and by her divine providence, rulers of the Violet City and the Purple Land of the Cat. They use pheromones and parasites to control their blissful, happy subjects. Too lazy to bother with most day-to-day activities, they are happy to let the wizards and administrators of the Violet City pretend they are in charge.

D

Dryland coral: a living rock, one of the ancient biomantic arts. Master growers can sculpt it and shape it into evocative, post-modernist forms that emphasize the interdependence of man and nature. There are side effects, as ill-grown DC may leech nutrients and life from nearby areas, creating localized deserts. Cancerous DC may even begin spreading runners that grow into burgeoning house-clusters. There are rumours of a great living-ghost city in the heart of the Twilight Desert which has grown to occupy an area larger than the Freehold of a Corporate Duke. A civil biomancer and crew can sculpt a dryland coral home in *d4 years for 10,000 cash per year.

E

Elf: scary, mythical, time-dilating, shape-shifting humanoid monsters said to live in the far north, beyond the Mountains of the Moon, where the tangled sky trees snag clouds from the sky and a shadow lurks over every soul.

Emerald City, also Metropolis: chief city of the Green Land, and largest city of the Rainbowlands. Governed by the banker priests of the Green God, devoted to greed and the untrammled growth of the vital forces of the individual and the society. Major forces include the Paladins of the Cog Flower, the Revenue-service Accountant-monks, and of course the Green Inquisition, which is crucial to maintaining public support for the fear-and-pain backed cash currency of this great industrial ecological meta-topia.

G

Golem: a soulless automaton powered directly from the source of creation. Golemancers are now a rare and exotic breed, but very prized, for even a few industrious golems may uplift a tribe into a civilized city, or turn a small city-state into a powerful empire. Poorly built, damaged, or jury-rigged golems can be very dangerous and have been known to explode catastrophically, such as in the Salt Reassembly Incident of the 7th year of the Era of Saffron Ascendant.

Gun: essentially any combat wand that doesn't require wizardly skill to operate. Some even use actual gunpowder magic.

F

Fac: usually very large, an organic machine created in a forgotten age, perhaps by combining wizards and autonomous vehicles in an unholy union. Sages speculate they were designed to produce useful commodities, now they are almost all lethal menaces, leaking toxic fumes and liquids, ravaging the land, and producing odd, dangerous and mostly useless artifacts or oozes.

Fetish: a bundle of matter imbued with a spirit or demon drawn by a wizard's sacrifice. Most wizards know how to create a basic fetish that serves them in exchange for their own life energy. Binding a spirit in exchange for a sacrificial victim, or an ongoing sacrifice of spirits and fowl, is a much harder task.

M

Metaskelton: a vascular fungoid colony organism that creates artificial skeletons of wood or stone for its own mobility. It is unclear what weird wizardry error resulted in a fungus that generates endoskeletons instead of exoskeletons, but there you have it. The artificial bones are surprisingly light and delicate, while the fungus itself is entirely a scavenger, leeching decaying plant and animal matter of nutrients. While creepy, metaskeltons are generally harmless and sometimes very beautiful in a *memento mori* way.

Metropolis: see Emerald City.

N

Necroambulism: related to necromancy, the technical discipline of turning dead tissue into an animate workforce for simple, repetitive tasks. A skilled necroambulist can create a Z or S-class laborer for 1d6 x 50 cash.

Nomads, Lime: nomads, reavers, goatherds, conquerors, shepherds, thieves, proud warriors, foul drunkards. Project all your nomad biases on them, add a bit of ice, a lot of citrus and some fire water. Enjoy a refreshing and totally novel RPG nomad. Or not.

P

Polybody: a spirit distributed across several bodies linked by real-time glandular psyche-to-psyche links. They are not more intelligent than ordinary mortals, but the additional bodies make them more resilient to damage, and by adding new bodies periodically, they ensure a mental continuity across long durations.

R

Rainbowlander: a human inhabitant of the five united lands around the Circle Sea, the Violet, Green, Yellow, Orange and Red. The Bluelanders are considered degenerate and somewhat subhuman due to the Blue God incident several centuries ago. Physically, the Rainbowlander humans span the gamut from about 3'6" to 6'6", from pointy ears to beards, from tusks to fangs, and some speciesist or racist fools would suggest that they are actually all variants of half-elves, half-orcs, half-halfings and half-dwarves. That would be foolish, and also potentially life-threatening under the Unity Promulgates of the Rainbow Inquisition.

Red Land District, RLD: radical anarchist socialist city-state on the shores of the Red Land, which became nominally independent after a bloody popular uprising against the Vintner Lords. Though recognized as independent and at peace for decades, its glazed brick heat ray colossi continue to burn every creature that tries to reach it by land. It has developed into a hub of piracy, free enterprise, biomechanics and hexad ingenuity - making it an unusual ally of the Emerald City.

Rat Rod of Immor[t]ality: an artifact referenced in the *Seven Epics of the Silky Sultan* as able to command rodents. Other sources say it gives the power of speech to rats. Yet others, that it makes a rodent immortal. Yet a fourth that it offers protection from rodents. A fifth that it can turn the tails of rodents into a panacea. A sixth that provides protection from pestilence and plague.

S

Spectrum Satraps: a mysterious human cult or clan living far to the west, fond of bright-colored suits that cover their whole bodies, and glass helmets. They travel in great prismatic walkers and are fond of illusions and radiant magics.

T

Thornstone: a fast-growing dryland coral variant, popular for building fences or enclosures for traveling parties. A single skilled grower can coax a twenty metres of thorny fence in a single day. The fence is relatively brittle, but the thorns are vicious as daggers (1d4 damage). With additional days, a grower can extend the thorns into longer blades, hooks, snares and more.

U

Ultra: ghosts or body-hopping spirits that rewrite the spiritual vital essence of their hosts to suit their needs. They are biomancers par excellence, but their ultimate goals are unclear. All major religions and trading organisations treat them as a hostile menace.

V

Vome: short for Violent Mechanism, a self-replicating synthetic organism or auto-golem created (according to myth) by a serpentine capitalist faction in the Long Long Ago to fight in a series of wars that eventually ended in the factions own destruction. It is not clear if the vomes are mindless, differently minded, intelligent and hateful, or just completely insane. They are inimical to much organic life and often assimilate or modify creatures on a whim,

however, baseline bugs and coding cockroaches mean the vomes are much less lethal than they could be.

W

Wizard: a short-hand for every kind of strange person dabbling in forgotten sciences and odd magics. Clerics, priests, shamans, witches, warlocks, druids and more. All are wizards to the Steppe-landers who make little distinction when dealing with mind-controlling, fire-throwing monsters.